

REYNOLDS HISTORICAL
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 00055 2189



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012

<http://archive.org/details/personalnarrati188385rhod>

840

9

²
SOLDIERS AND SAILORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

—OF—

RHODE ISLAND.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES.

Series 3

nos. 1-10

THIRD SERIES,

Nos. 1 TO 10.

1883-85.

THE
NEWBERRY
LIBRARY

45670

CONTENTS

1774400

- No. 1. LIFE ON THE MEXICAN BLOCKADE. By W. B. HORTON.
- No. 2. MY FOUR MONTHS' EXPERIENCE AS A PRISONER OF WAR.
By THOMAS SOUTHERN.
- No. 3. GUNBOAT SERVICE ON THE JAMES RIVER. By WILLIAM
AVERY.
- No. 4. A PRIVATE'S RECOLLECTIONS OF FREDERICKSBURG.
EUGENE A. COFF.
- No. 5. CAMP AND HOSPITAL. By GEORGE E. PERKINS.
- No. 6. CAVALRY SERVICE WITH GEN. SHEPARD, AND LIFE IN
LIBBY PRISON. By GEORGE N. BLISS.
- No. 7. SERVICE WITH BATTERY F, FIRST R. I. LIGHT ARTILLERY
IN NORTH CAROLINA. By PHILIP S. CHASE.
- No. 8. REMINISCENCES OF GUNBOAT SERVICE ON THE NANTUXET
RIVER. By FRANK B. BUTTS.
- No. 9. THE BATTLE OF GROVETON, AUGUST 30, 1862. By FREDERICK
DENISON.
- No. 10. RECOLLECTIONS OF MONOCACY. By ALFRED B. RICE.

WOLFF

Soldiers' and Sailors' Historical Society
OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

PERSONAL NARRATIVES.
Third Series, No. 1.

LIFE ON THE TEXAN BLOCKADE
W. F. HUTCHINSON, M. D.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,
BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THIRD SERIES—No. 1.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
1883.

L I F E
ON THE
TEXAN BLOCKADE.

BY
WILLIAM F. HUTCHINSON, M. D.
LATE SURGEON U.S. NAVY.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
• 1883.

PROVIDENCE PRESS COMPANY, PRINTERS.

LIFE ON THE TEXAN BLOCKADE.

[Read before the Society April 17, 1883.]

So many years have passed since the scenes were enacted which I shall try to recall, that, to the actors therein, they seem but dreams — airy structures in the deepest recesses of remembrance. Perhaps they have become still more like shadows, since they were not of a nature to be quickly recalled; being, for the most part, dull iterations of a routine life which grew so terribly monotonous, after years of it had been passed, that its influence over memory's usually firm grasp, was to cause it to be thrown aside as quickly as possible. The few brilliant exceptions, the occasional chase, the still rarer boat expeditions or attacks upon fortifications, burned themselves a little deeper into the tablets of those years; and when one essays to recall what happened at such or

such a time, the exceptions come first, and are apt to quite over-cloud the more ordinary matters of our old-time quiet ocean life. But whatever interest this paper may possess, must attach only to a sketch of that existence as a whole, and be drawn from things that then seemed trivial, but are now become, by lapse of time, of quite a respectable magnitude. When those to whom these papers are a legacy, and to whom they may be of actual use, come to look them over, it will be, I am persuaded, these very little things of the soldier's or sailor's daily life, these minutiae now so little thought of, which will first attract attention,—and having attracted, will hold it. In preparing this paper, I have drawn largely from a diary which I kept at the time, and take the liberty to transcribe the first page as a fitting introduction.

On board the United States steam sloop-of-war "Lackawanna," flag-ship of the second division of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron, I commence this record on the fifth day of February, 1865, proposing to keep a diary of such incidents in our monotonous life as shall seem worthy of being written; both for my own amusement and to fulfill a promise.

It may, at some future time, prove interesting to friends who have no idea of blockade life, beyond the scanty facts gleaned from newspapers or occasional letters from loved ones doing penance at various points upon our southern coast.

“And weary was the long patrol,
The thousand miles of shapeless strand,
From Brazos to San Blas that roll,
Their drifting dunes of desert sand.”

It will be seen that the scene opens at a time when the war was rapidly drawing to a close, when the victorious operations of our forces had placed almost the entire coast line again under the dominion of the old flag, and when Texas, with its isolated vast territory, was practically the only region yet unattacked. To the very last, its geographical position protected it from serious attack, and but for Banks' abortive Red River movement, the war was carried on by the navy, operating by means of a more or less rigid blockade. A glance at the map will show that this was by no means so difficult a task as the mere extent of Texan coast line would seem to indicate; for there are few harbors on its whole length,

and only one of these, Galveston, capable of affording entrance to vessels of moderate draught.

Let us, then, begin our story here,—sitting in an open port, gazing listlessly across three miles of brown water, rolling athwart our hawse in short white-capped waves, to Galveston Point and Fort Magruder, with the Confederate banner streaming above it. To the left is the long white sand-beach in front of the town, along which are continually strolling parties to watch the Yankee men-of-war, or occasional horsemen, exercising their steeds. Behind the sand strip rise the red roofs and spires of the city, then numbering but a few thousand souls, and to the right the smoke-stacks and rigging of the "Harriet Lane," the "Matagorda" and "Isabel," all loaded with cotton, waiting a favorable moment to run out. Along the coast, stretching in a line ten miles long, were the vessels of the division, eight in number, just far enough apart and far enough from the flag-ship to be reached by signals by night or day.

The current coming out of Galveston bay here meets the coast stream from the east, and the result

is a long roll which gives the vessels a steady sway that used at first to drive us nearly frantic, but which, as one grew accustomed to the motion, became as essential to our slumbers as an infant's lullaby. Inboard, the white decks of the ships glittered in the hot sun, scored by brass tracks for gun carriages and dotted with piles of solid shot, standing handily in racks near each piece. Jack tars sat sailor fashion between them, looking over ditty boxes, making or mending clothing, or spinning interminable yarns. An occasional officer moved slowly about the deck, clad in white trowsers and undress jacket, generally bringing up under the top-gallant fore-castle, our smoking-room. The watch officer paced backward and forward the starboard side of the quarter-deck, and to port the midshipman of the watch and an old quarter-master kept sharp lookout for signals from the gunboats on station, and upon the enemy ashore. Below, the captain—flag-officer by reason of seniority—kept solitary state in his cabin; the ward-room officers made themselves snug just forward, and the warrant officers and the engineers were in the steerage, one step further forward.

The ordinary routine of ship life was rigidly observed on board, for we were flag-ship, and must set an example. No cigar or pipe could be lit outside the captain's cabin, the "old man's" quarters, as we called them, except away forward—some three hundred feet on our ship; and many were the growls about so confounded a nuisance, as we called it. But our captain, George F. Emmons, was an officer of the old school, and while scrupulously polite to all hands, and the kindest hearted commander in the squadron to his men, old "Pop Emmons" as they affectionately called him, enforced rigidly every detail of regulation regarding all points of etiquette, uniform, etc. With two exceptions, all on board were regular officers, with long naval schooling; but the longer a man stays in the service, the more confirmed growler he becomes, and on that tiresome duty, every little matter assumes giant proportions to annoy. Yet, after all, there must be some escape valve for condensed irritation, and it may be that finding fault with what is inevitable, without the smallest idea of resisting further than words, is as little harmful as any other form.

Mr. Barton, who succeeded Mr. Spencer as executive officer after the Mobile fight, had recently returned from three years' duty in the China seas, where, as first lieutenant of the "Wyoming," he took part in the attacks upon the Japanese forts and gunboats, for which the United States afterwards paid rich compensation. His stories about the daimios or native princes, and the ludicrous anecdotes he told of their methods of fighting, whiled away many a weary hour in ward-room or under the top-gallant forecastle.

Upon the "Lackawanna" there were many musical geniuses, and we organized a very good chorus for Sunday services, which made an effective part of the worship. Perhaps few hours were more pleasantly passed than those occupied in practising chants or in arranging parts for church service. At ten every Sunday morning, the church pennant was set, and the slowly tolled bell passed forward the invitation to all the men to attend who wished. Presently some two hundred would come aft and cluster in picturesque groups about the guns—the marines, in full dress uniform, drawn up in line to port. Having

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry, no matter how small, should be recorded to ensure the integrity of the financial data. This includes not only sales and purchases but also expenses and income. The document further states that regular audits are necessary to verify the accuracy of these records and to identify any discrepancies. It also mentions that the records should be kept for a minimum of seven years, as required by law. The second part of the document provides a detailed breakdown of the company's financial performance over the past year. It includes a table showing the monthly sales figures, which have increased steadily over the period. The document also lists the major expenses, such as rent, utilities, and salaries, and compares them to the previous year's figures. It concludes by stating that the company has achieved a significant profit margin, which is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the entire team. The final part of the document contains a list of recommendations for the future. It suggests that the company should continue to invest in research and development to stay ahead of the competition. It also recommends that the company should focus on improving its customer service and marketing efforts to attract more clients. Finally, it advises that the company should maintain its commitment to transparency and accountability, as this is essential for long-term success.

no chaplain, for in those days there were but few afloat, the captain would read the service to the accompaniment of the swashing waves. Bared heads reverently returned the responses, and voices husky with many a salt sea gale joined heartily in the simple hymns which we chose for them. Although Jack is usually a profane man, always a rough man, and, frequently a drunken man ashore, the service of the church had always an excellent influence. All the rest of the day would feel the benison of the prayers; and the difference between the flag-ships and the gun-boats, where no such service was practicable, was noted by the men on board of us with great pride. "Our officers give us full rations of church, d'ye see, and we are none the worse for it," they would say.

There were two bright points in our life to be kept well in view—one the chase after the blockade runners, with its possibilities of rich reward of prize money; the other, our occasional visits to New Orleans for necessary repairs, and perchance to expend some of the money accumulated during months of hermitage at sea.

On the morning of the 20th of February, while

lying quietly in my berth, reading, there came from on deck the quick, loud order from the officer on watch, "Stand by the cable! Steamer close aboard! Slip!" And as the heavy iron chain slid with a splash into the water, four bells in the engine-room started the ship ahead fast, and with "Hard-a-port!" away we went. In less time than I have written these words, I was on deck with almost every one else, and saw a small side-wheel steamer flying past us with a most extraordinary speed. Our long vessel took several minutes to turn around, and in that time the little steamer was a mile away, going so fast as to make the shots we sent after her as harmless as rain-drops. When we got fairly under way, and the sailing master had his course giving him "direct for Morro Castle Light," we knew we were in for a long chase. With our glasses we could plainly see the piles of cotton bales on deck, and, from the torrents of black smoke pouring from her funnels, understood the desperate efforts she was making to escape. Gradually, in spite of our utmost endeavors, she drew away from us, and, while all hands were speculating on

how many bales she had on board, and dividing the prize money, even arranging how it should be spent, the chances of getting at it were decreasing. All day long we steamed hard after her, and at night lost her in a cloud-bank in the eastern sky.

Still, steadily on we went, direct for Havana bay, and, when grey dawn grew out of the night, were rewarded by finding her still in sight. She made another heroic effort to escape, throwing overboard bales of cotton in dozens, hoping, I presume, that the rapacious Yankees would stop and pick them up. But we resisted all temptation, although every bale was worth five or six hundred dollars, and kept after her. About noon she began to slack up, and then it would be hard to describe the excitement aboard us. From the grave old captain to the little messenger boy a dozen years old, all were perched upon the most eligible lookouts—every nerve strained to the utmost—as I have often thought a pack of hounds must feel in chase of a stag. In the engine and fire-room men were working thirty minutes' reliefs, for it was so hot down there that no human being could stand it longer; and the great

furnaces were devouring coal at the rate of three tons an hour. The piston rods rose and fell with quick strokes, and the whole main deck danced so under the vibrating blows of the screw that to stand was difficult. Closer and closer we drew, until the first lieutenant sang out, "Clear away the forward rifle! Train on starboard bow! Luff a little, quarter-master! Fire!" and with a cheery howl the 300-pounder shell started after our prize money. Exploding just a little short, the rain of fragments of that iron messenger upon and around the steamer was so convincing that she gave up at once and hove to until we came up. When we got alongside, a boat was lowered and a lieutenant sent on board for the captain, supercargo and any passengers she might have, who were considered as prisoners and sent North to be confined, while the ship was placed under charge of one of our officers with a prize crew whose duty it was to take her to the nearest admiralty court for condemnation.

When Mr. Jones returned, his account of the state of things aboard was pitiful. Their efforts to escape had been so great that her fire-room crew

were about dead. They had been compelled to work them all steadily, not having men enough to change as we did, and they were lying on deck, several dead—so the lieutenant reported—and others dying. A visit on board made at once, resulted in saving all their lives, but the men were never good for anything afterwards. The ship was the "Isabel," from Galveston for Havana, with 600 bales of cotton and no passengers. The captain and supercargo, jolly good fellows, were sent to the North, and the vessel condemned at Key West. My share was \$750, which made a nice day's work and a promise of many a nice day's play.

February 22d was greeted on the blockade with as much form and ceremony as possible. The ship was dressed from stem to stern in many colors. From each mast-head floated an immense national ensign; from the jack-staff on the bowsprit the Union Jack; strung between the masts were parti-colored signal flags, making the ship quite gay. At noon, the usual national salute was fired, and in the ward-room many a bottle joined in the fusilade. In the afternoon, Captain Erben, of the gunboat "Pinola,"

came on board and reported the capture of a privateer schooner at Matagorda. After his official report to the flag officer, the captain came down into the ward-room and told us the story, which was one of cool daring and steady courage that might well have served as a foundation for a romance, had not the service developed so many gallant acts that no one could well be chosen as the brightest. It was thus: The schooner had been lying inside the bay for several weeks, arming and fitting out with sea stores and awaiting her crew, when she was discovered by the "Pinola's" lookout. Captain Erben at once determined upon her capture, and organized a night boat expedition to cut her out. When the boat reached the bar at the entrance of the narrow river, in the thick darkness of a foggy night, the surf was so heavy that they failed to get in until after three attempts. Finally they succeeded, baled out, and with muffled oars pulled along close to shore, until the sound of a sentry's challenge within twenty yards warned them to look out. The officer's night-glass made out a rebel battery camp, with three guns trained upon the channel, and a sentry pacing his

beat close to them. With stern silence and suspended oars, they waited, undiscovered, until the sentry was out of sight, and once more pulled for the schooner, which they found was lying close to a wharf, to which she was made fast, under the guns of another battery of six howitzers, whose muzzles shone in the light of a camp fire burning near. Undismayed by the fearful risk, the brave men ran their boats alongside, sprang over the low bulwarks, and with revolver and cutlass enforced the utter silence which was their only chance of escape. Only nine men were found on board, including the captain, who were so utterly surprised and frightened at the sudden and unexpected attack of an enemy whom they believed ten miles away, instead of inside Matagorda bay, close to a camp of Confederate soldiers and under the guns of a battery, that they made not the smallest resistance, only begging their captors, for God's sake, to get away as soon as possible, or all hands would be blown out of the water together. The ensign in command coolly cut the lines, and she swept noiselessly out into the current, past the guns and out of the harbor with the strong

ebb tide, never disturbing a single "reb." Unfortunately she grounded on the bar, and the ensign, not daring to remain until daylight, set her on fire, blew her up, and came safely off to his ship. The consternation of the rebels in the morning, and their futile rage may, perhaps, be better imagined than described.

The next morning we got the anchor and stood on our way down the coast to Pass Cavallo. Leaving Velasco behind, where we saw several cotton laden schooners, but caught none, the engines were stopped, fires banked, and all sail made. All day we glided on at six miles an hour, the ship looking like a picture, covered with canvas and swaying to the gentle swell of the inky water; for I can compare the appearance of the sea hereabouts to nothing else than blue ink—deep, transparent blue, changing to a living green where the ship's bow quickly divided its glassy surface, and to a creamy white where the bubbles in the wake crushed each other in their whirling race after the rudder. At night it is so lit by phosphorescent insects, of which the number is incalculable, that we seemed to sail in heaven's clear vault, rather than on the Mexican Gulf; and the

"Milky way" was beneath our keel and over our heads at once, sparkling both with glittering, flashing stars. Ah! on such nights as this, it is easy to account for the deep love the votaries of the sea bear their glorious mistress, the devotion with which they cling to her, fickle though she be.

Arriving off Brazos Santiago, or Point Isabel, we found the national colors flying over the only point upon the whole Texan coast where the national government holds sway. About 2,000 men formed the garrison, under command of Col. Jones, Thirty-fourth Indiana volunteers, who reported that crowds of Mexicans were coming daily to the fort, asking for protection from the French, who held Mexico with bayonets already trembling. Here a report also reached us that our consular flag at Matamoros had been hauled down by Mejia, the French general, the consul given three days to leave the country, under penalty of being hung, and his personal effects confiscated. This requires investigation; and, ordering the "Seminole" to join us, we are away for the Rio Grande to look into the matter. As Cortinas, the Mexican who sold out to Maximilian, and, not re-

ceiving his money, with true Mexican instinct, immediately joined the other side, was marching with a large force upon Mejia, who had but one thousand French soldiers, we suspected that there would be little left for us to do when we arrived, beyond hoisting the flag again. Off Bagdad, a little village at the mouth of the river, we found an immense fleet of vessels of all nations, awaiting cargoes of cotton or unloading cargoes of war stores. Of course, all this is meant for the Confederate forces, but it goes by lighters up to Matamoros first, and from that neutral town into Texas. Far above the forest of masts around, towered the lofty spars of the French frigate "Rhone," and close to her was the English sloop-of-war "Petrel," neither of which ships could compare in beauty with our own—even the Swede and German merchant captains around calling us "the lovely Yankee frigate." Speaking both Spanish and French, Captain Emmons sent me in a boat to Mejia's head-quarters, to demand explanations as to the consul. The general received me with much dignity and politeness, seated in front of his adobe house, smoking a long cigar, and surrounded by a numerous

staff, all of whom wore some French uniform. He promptly denied the story about any insult being offered to either flag or consul, and stated that he left of his own free will, telling him, the general, that he was merely going upon an excursion. With this reduced to writing, I returned on board, and we soon got under way again, bound eastward.

Next morning, just at daylight, I was on deck for a bath—and in the tropics a cool sea-bath from the hose while the decks are being washed down, is a delicious bracer—when the cry, so startling always, came ringing aft, "Man overboard!" Next the orders from the officer of the deck, "Let go the life buoy! Clear away the starboard quarter boat! Stop her! Lower away there," all at once, and as every man knew exactly what to do, the orders were executed with such speed that the boat was far astern, close to the life buoys, before five minutes. If the man had been there he would have been picked up before he was thoroughly wet through, but, in falling, he had caught a rope trailing from a bow port and hung on so well that, although the ship was going eleven knots, and his hands were badly

torn, he was hauled aboard by his grip, though almost exhausted. A good swig set him up again, and he was none the worse for his bath.

What a life is a sailor's! When quiet had been restored after the preceding episode, the unlucky man, going forward amongst his messmates, was greeted with such a storm of abuse and ridicule as a "Lubberly son of a sea cook;" "A blasted landsman, with hayseed in his hair," and other choice epithets, that he slunk away from the men who would have periled their lives for his an hour before, abashed and ashamed. It is always good-humored, however, this abuse of Jack, and corresponds to the more gentlemanly growling of the officers aft.

Occasionally we were martyrs to that terrible disease common among men who spend months at sea—far from home—far from the refining influence of women—far from land with its changing pictures. For the sea is always the same *in esse*—whether at rest or in angry commotion, and its monotony at times becomes simply terrible. This malady is known as land sickness—*terralgia*—to coin a word. It comes on insidiously in dreams, when one's sleep-

ing ears conduct to a brain awake the rippling music of rivulets between their grassy banks, the rustling of June breezes in leafy trees, and the glad song of free birds. Then to wake and hear but the steady swash of water six inches from one's head, and realize that only a dream has given an hour of shore, begets a desire so ardent as to grow almost to a mania, to step again on dry land, to smell the earth, to fill the lungs with other than salt air, or to stretch out again upon some green bank and watch the summer sun filtering streams of light through thick foliage overhead. Occasionally this becomes a real disease, and the victim must either get away or his mental poise is destroyed. More than once, upon our long tour of service, lasting over six months this time, were the surgeons of the fleet compelled to invalid men and send them home without other discernible cause than this.

Sitting in a bow port one day, listlessly watching a fish-line trailing aft in the strong current, I was amused at the *sang froid* of a sailor who had been sent down on the great anchor to make fast a fall around the flukes to haul it up by—to eat it, as the

term is—when it was hanging down in such a manner that every pitch of the ship plunged it deep into the water, and each roll threw it against the side with a heavy thump. The man, who was captain of the forecastle, quietly clambered down the stock of the anchor, and, seated on one of the flukes, proceeded about his work as coolly as if on deck; while at regular short intervals he was totally submerged, alternating his dips with a rousing bump against the ship. It didn't seem to annoy him in the least, although he must have been half an hour at the job—and the water was quite cold. But Jack takes naturally to water, and goes into it as comfortably as a duck.

Once in a while, some petty offence graver than words—some play of fisticuffs or petty larceny—would call for punishment, and the culprit was submitted to what was called “a summary court-martial.” These were always carried out with as much form and ceremony as possible, to impress the men with the consciousness that stern law reigned at sea as well as ashore, and the certainty that no offender would be unjustly punished or condemned without a

fair trial. In hot weather, a portion of the quarter deck was curtained off with flags for the court room, and furnished with a table, chairs, a naval code, the articles of war, a book or two of common law, and a Bible. The order detailing the court specified the presiding officer, the senior in rank, and the judge advocate, usually a staff officer, with a fair knowledge of naval rules and rulings. A sentry was detailed from the marine guard, and guarded the court room from all intrusion. As the members of the court, in full uniform and with side arms, took their seats, a pennant was hoisted, indicating what was going on, and the accused brought in by the master-at-arms. He was allowed to choose counsel, or, if he wished, an officer was assigned to act as such. Then matters proceeded regularly, sworn witnesses being heard on both sides, and the court cleared for deliberation. When all were satisfied, the members were asked their verdict by the judge advocate in inverse order of rank, the majority governing. In no court-martial that I ever saw, was there any final difference of opinion amongst the members; nor do I recall a single instance where the

prisoner found fault with his sentence. I believed then, and have seen no reason to change my opinion since, that a court-martial is the fairest, squarest tribunal that was ever constituted.

It used frequently to happen that blockaders running in of a dark, stormy night, would miss the difficult channels into Galveston and run aground on the bar. In that case, as soon as it was light enough some of the fleet would steam within range and shell her until she was destroyed, or until the rifled guns of the fort would get their range and drive them off. I remember very well a similar occurrence one morning. The lookout discovered, the moment it was light enough to make out the shore, a pretty steamer aground on the outer bar, close in shore. As we were nearest we got up anchor and went in to burn her, but before we could get her range, the fort got ours, and a few two-hundred pound Armstrong shells spoiled our fun. It wasn't worth while to risk one man's life, to say nothing of our ship, for a blockader, and we hauled off again.

All day long, we saw boats plying between the vessel and the shore, laden with cargo and men.

Towards night, the captain decided to send in a boat expedition to cut her out, giving the command to Mr. Allen. After a nasty night's work we got back to the ship next morning tired out and beaten. When the boats were manned and armed, we pulled in for the bar, leaving the ship at ten o'clock, with five miles to go. Everything was quiet until we got close aboard her, and the men were loosening their cutlasses and pistols in their belts for a rush aboard, when we were caught sight of by a vigilant lookout. He hailed sharp and loud, "Boat ahoy!" No reply, and every man bent forward to his oar. "What boats are those?" came next, instantly followed by a volley of rifle shots, and a couple of blue lights were touched off, whose brilliant fire made everything around as clear as daylight. They had, it seems, anticipated our attack, and put a company of riflemen from the fort on board, who opened on us at twenty yards' distance. Well, to say that we left that vicinity instant, is gospel. Just how we managed to do it I cannot tell, for the air was full of buzzing bullets, which struck the boats, the oars, the men, and seemed so thick that no one ex-

pected to get out clear. But at last we pulled out into darkness and counted casualties. Only three men were hit, and one officer—none seriously; but there were not four whole oars in the lot, and the boats were badly shot up. Next morning, at general quarters, Captain Emmons publicly thanked the men who were in the boats for their coolness. The blockader was named the "Lark."

On the 10th of March, 1865, the naval headquarters at New Orleans received a telegram from the United States consul at Havana, to the effect that the famous rebel ram "Stonewall Jackson" had arrived at that port from Nassau, and sailed again, bound for Galveston. Ever since the "Alabama" had sunk the "Hatteras" almost within our reach, there had been sore feelings aboard the "Lackawanna" at not having a hand in that affair, and the news of this formidable cruiser's approach was hailed with delight. On one of the hottest nights I ever saw, we got our anchor, sent down light upper spars, and started on a scouting cruise after her. All hands kept the brightest kind of a lookout, and the reports from the different watch stations came

aft with quick promptness as the bell struck the half hours. About noon the next day, being then somewhere off Sabine Pass, the lookout aloft reported a full-rigged brig, under studding sails, standing along toward us. As this was the rig of the "Stonewall," we thought we were in for a fight, but she turned out to be an innocent army transport. The cruise continued until the 22d, when, having seen nothing of our antagonist, we ran into Southwest Pass for news, and were told by the pilot that Jeff. Davis had been captured, and the "Stonewall Jackson" surrendered to the Spanish government at Havana. And we agreed that this made a far pleasanter way of ending the sail than by a fight against such odds as the rebel iron-clad ram.

As we lay at anchor off the Pass, I watched with curiosity and interest the water of the river mix with the sea. Where we lay, some four miles from shore, the line of separation was as sharply drawn as if it were the edge of a thunder cloud against the blue of a clear sky. The pure ocean refused to be contaminated with the foul washings of thousands of miles of dirty shores, and not until coerced thereto by

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the transparency and accountability of the organization. The text outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data, ensuring that the information is reliable and up-to-date.

Furthermore, the document highlights the role of technology in streamlining the record-keeping process. It mentions the use of specialized software and digital databases to store and retrieve information efficiently. This technological approach not only reduces the risk of human error but also allows for faster access to the data when needed.

In addition, the document addresses the challenges associated with data management. It notes that as the volume of data increases, it becomes more difficult to maintain its integrity and security. To overcome these challenges, the organization has implemented strict protocols for data handling and storage, ensuring that all information is protected and accessible to authorized personnel only.

The second part of the document focuses on the analysis of the collected data. It describes the various statistical methods and tools used to interpret the data and identify trends. The analysis reveals that there is a significant correlation between certain factors, which provides valuable insights into the organization's performance and future prospects.

Based on the findings of the analysis, the document proposes several strategies to improve the organization's efficiency and effectiveness. These strategies include implementing new processes, investing in additional resources, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. The document concludes by stating that these measures are expected to lead to a more successful and sustainable future for the organization.

strong currents and driving winds, would she yield, and then reluctantly. First, a patch of the muddy stream would be chopped off and swallowed, as one takes a pill; then another and another, until the volumes are equal—the river less and less—and at last, a long way out, the sea resumes its triumphant blue, and the river is no more.

Many a night was spent in fishing, as there are several varieties of the finy tribe hereabout that will only bite in the dark. We caught quantities of sea trout—dry, bony beasts—croakers, little beauties, who would croak like frogs several minutes after coming on deck, and sheepshead, known in every Atlantic water. All these made a most welcome addition to our ship's fare, and I, who was caterer of the mess, was delighted to get them. For, to provide three times a day for twenty-five hungry men, all accustomed to dainty living, is no fool of a task, even where markets are near and good; but to do the same at sea, from canned goods, ship's rations, and what we bought from the supply steamer, which came monthly from New York, is a very different thing. To hear those men growl sometimes, was

awful. Coming down to a nice dinner of soup—that was easy to have, fish, when we could catch them, and a splendid big piece of corned beef or boiled pork, with dried fruit dessert or some good pudding, and then to listen was enough to disgust any caterer. “Oh, confound this salt horse, Doctor; can’t you do better than that?” “Same piece that Old Pillgarlic gave us last week.” “Catch me astonishing my stomach with that stuff,” etc., etc., *ad infinitum*, were some of the remarks that greeted me as I came to the foot of the table, my place. Regularly once a week I used to flare up in return, bring the mess books out and slam them down on the table, telling them to choose another caterer and be—hanged. Some way, however, no one else suited them so well, and I remained the housekeeper for over a year.

Once the boys had been howling for sardines at a rate, and with a fiery vigor of language that couldn’t be repeated ashore, and I made up my mind that when the supply ship did come in, they should be satisfied. As her numbers were made out, I collected \$25 from each officer, being the average mess bill for the month, and went on board the “Bermuda,”

where I bought every sardine she had, and not much else, for tea stores. Wasn't that ward-room serene for a week? "Our caterer is all right; he knows what we want." "Poke Pills up now and then, and there's no better fellow going," and such expressions as those had replaced the growls. But in about ten days, sardines began to cloy. First, one would insinuate, "Wonder if the Doctor bought any spiced salmon?" "I'm awfully fond of smoked beef occasionally," and so on, but to no avail, and they had to stick to the sardines, which were never again mentioned in that mess without disgust. It was fifteen years afterwards before I tasted another.

For amusements we had dominoes, chess, and draughts. No cards were allowed on board a man-of-war, and I believe that regulation has remained in force. Occasionally we would get up charades, but the inherent difficulties of place as to wardrobe were very great. It was the greatest fun possible to watch our gunner, Mr. Foster, with a couple of the sail-maker's mates, making up gear for the female parts; and the officer who usually put it on, looked so like a long, lank Hoosier woman, that no one

could keep a straight face. But it soon grew tiresome, for there were no bright eyes to smile applause, no sweet lips to say "bravo"—and we soon relapsed again into our usual do-nothing ways. It is a difficult thing to be absolutely idle for months, without any of the common distractions of *terra firma*—and men of nervous temperament found it hard to learn. Once acquired, however, it is a veritable Sinbad, and fetters many a strong man in iron bands, when he enters the competitive list of civil life.

Long before we left the Texan coast, we were past masters, and the hours, days and weeks went by without a ripple—wasted time. I never knew any one to pursue any steady occupation a week. Books would be produced, a line of study laid out, but it was no use. The deadly laziness that was peculiar to the service of the blockade, would destroy the best intentions and bring them to naught, and *dolce far niente* was the only advice strictly followed aboard. One officer had provided himself before leaving home with an elaborate set of books, plates and instruments for studying the fish of the Gulf, which had never been thoroughly described; but

after a couple weeks' work, during which he made the ward-room smell like an unclean fish market, and earned the objurgations of his messmates, that was abandoned, and with it the only organized attempt at study I ever saw at sea.

One morning, it was the 26th of February, we caught sight of what appeared to be a raft, with some men upon it, paddling in our direction. With an idea of torpedo boats in his head, the captain ordered the ship to be got under way, and we steamed in to meet it. But it was only some deserters, who had gotten away from the rebel lines, stole wood enough to build a raft of, and sculled out in the night. They were the usual type of Texan rebs—dare-devil looking desperadoes, who had run away because there was no active fighting going. The officer, Lieutenant Pentley, Fifth Texas Heavy Artillery, gave us some items regarding the blockade runners which were worth having. According to his account, there were nineteen steamers running as regularly as possible, bringing in cargoes of war stores, medicines, of which the confederacy was sadly in need, fruit, wines and ice, the last a luxury for

none but millionaires. After the arrival of a steamer, the shops in town would be doing a thriving business for a few days—until the new goods were sold—and then would close doors until the next one came. This made trade a little desultory and uncertain, but the profits were enormous, and more than made up the loss of time. For instance, a Miss Romaine, who came out under flag of truce, told us that a calico gown she wore had cost her \$200 in gold the week before. It will be remembered that a specie basis was maintained in Texas throughout the war, through their proximity to Mexico, and the uninterrupted trade between the two. When a blockade runner got in and unloaded, her cargo of cotton was always ready, and instantly loaded, ready for a start. Then came a period of waiting for a favorable chance to run out—that meaning a stormy, dark night, when the low hulls of the vessels, painted a dirty white, were quite invisible a hundred yards away. At the last moment before dark, the bearings of each man-of-war outside would be carefully taken, and steam got up. This part we could see from our stations, and always had plenty of warning of a

coming attempt. As soon as it was dark they would creep slowly down the channel, over the bar, and then, with every possible pound of steam and the greatest speed, would make a dash for our line. All we could hear would be the beat of paddles upon the water—but sound in darkness is so deceptive that no one can tell from which direction it comes, and as nothing could be seen, we usually kept perfectly still and let them go. Indeed, at the speed with which they were going, even if we had seen them, only a shot could have overhauled them—our clumsy blockaders, never. Vast sums of money were made in this way, the profits of a single trip more than covering the entire cost of the vessel.

A Nassau merchant who was largely in the trade, told me a couple of years ago, that three successful voyages had netted him £100,000, after paying all the enormous expenses. When you consider that a blockade runner captain was paid \$5,000 for each round trip, and the crew in proportion, you may form some idea what those were. And there was scarcely any danger in the business. When one was caught, a rare occurrence, the only punishment for

the officers was imprisonment North—from which powerful influence freed them promptly—and for the men, none at all. They took their chances of a stray shot now and then, it is true, but soon came to look upon those as amusing rather than dangerous.

During the months of July and August, when the summer heats are at their maximum, the occurrence of heavy thunder storms was a matter of daily happening, usually beginning about 4 P. M., with the appearance, on a clear blue sky, of scattered masses of cirro-cumulus clouds, which joined into one with marvellous rapidity, and instantly darkness would prevail. The rain came in torrents, accompanied by very peculiar discharges of electricity. No long, ziz-zag lines of flame, cleaving the clouds in different directions, but single fire-balls, following each other every second, darting straight from the sky to the sea, with a hiss like an enormous shell, and exploding as they struck with a sharp report. The thunder never came in peals, muttering and rolling for several seconds, but staccato, in quick concussions, distinctly separate, and of such immense volume of sound as to stun men and make the good

ship quiver in every timber. Balls of fire would perch upon the trucks and remain during the whole uproar, which we finally grew so accustomed to as to call it our "electric matinee," and to count upon its appearance with confidence.

Saturday night was always celebrated in some way. Sometimes it would be musical, with a series of songs and choruses, sometimes a story night, when the Arabian Nights would be cast far into the shade, and again we would play at some game of words. Anything requiring much action was out of the question, owing to the ceaseless roll of the ship, which barely allowed one to keep his feet when careful, to say nothing of running about. Always were the dear ones at home tenderly remembered this night. No liquor was at that time permitted on board a man-of-war, outside the hospital stores; but we managed a very nice bowl of punch, with wines of different kinds, which were allowed, and the last toast was ever "sweethearts and wives." With uplifted glasses we stood for a moment, and each man's soul went back to his dear home and beloved ones so far away, and carried a benison on its wings.

After several months of such existence as this, the talk in ward-room and steerage was constantly of getting into port, and once more treading firm ground. Everything on board grew more and more uncomfortable, the sea rations more unwelcome, and the salt air, which was so delicious in its purity at first, was now but the atmosphere of a prison. There were only two apparent ways of bringing the cruise to an end—either the disabling of the machinery, or an epidemic of contagious disease. The latter being too terrible to ever think of, much less hope for, the former was the only chance, and I don't think that any officer aboard passed the open engine-room hatches on his way fore and aft, without casting an eager glance below to see if, perchance, something might not be going wrong. But our engineers were skillful and the machinery good,—and there seemed to be no hope in that direction.

One evening a party of us were sitting smoking in the bright moonlight, yarning as sailors will about scenes ashore with maidens fair and sweethearts true, when we once again fell to discussing ways and means to get there. After an unusually long inter-

val of hopeless, gloomy silence, the chief engineer remarked in a casual, careless way, "Curious, isn't it, what soft metal is put into shaft boxes." As all eyes were bent eagerly upon him, for the chief usually meant more than he said, he went on. "Singular, too, how easy it is to cut it. Now, if a rope should be trailing overboard this evening when I turn the engines over, and should get foul of the screw, it would probably work up into the box and cut the metal out, and then we should have to get out of here quick." All hands drew a long breath, but said not a word. Now, singularly enough, at eight bells that very night, it was dark and rainy, and the mizen-spanker sheet got overboard—rolled there, I suppose—got foul of the shaft, and not only cut out the metal box, but broke off one blade of the propeller. So, of course, our cruise was over, and the next afternoon we got up the anchor and squared away under sail for Southwest Pass and New Orleans. To speak of the slow progress under canvass, and the crippled screw, of the sail up the wide river, past orange groves and piney woods, whose sweet perfume was new life—past the Head of the

Passes and the dirty little village of Belize, until we arrived off St. Joseph street, and of our wild delight at once again getting on *terra firma*, does not come within the scope of the title of this paper; and yet they all made part of our blockade life.

Now, as I lay down my pen and relegate to the past the memories I have evoked from the vasty deep, I see in every direction through our broad land the goodly fruits of those months of warlike activity, of tedious watching, even of occasional inglorious defeat. In the South, prostrated as she was by the strife, there is steadily growing a sentiment of faith in the common country, and of loyalty to the common flag, which will, in time, blot out all rancor, obliterate all hate, and make us one in heart as we are in bond. This cannot be expected soon. This, and perhaps the succeeding generation, must pass from the scenes of action before the last drop of bitter blood can disappear, before the Southerners will cease to date all important occurrences "so long after the war." But in the future, I can see no shadow of parting between us, and know that some day the whole world will turn with reverence and

pride to the vast empires of the West, the glorious American republic, as the exponent of right, an asylum for the oppressed, and the defender of universal liberty.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,
BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THIRD SERIES — NO. 2.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
1883

MY FOUR MONTHS' EXPERIENCE

AS A

PRISONER OF WAR.

BY

THOMAS SIMPSON.

[Late Captain Battery F, First Regiment, Rhode Island Light Artillery.]



PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
1883.

PROVIDENCE PRESS COMPANY, PRINTERS.

MY FOUR MONTHS' EXPERIENCE

AS A

PRISONER OF WAR.

Battery "F," First Regiment, Rhode Island Light Artillery, with which I had served from its muster-in, was encamped on the twenty-seventh of October, 1864, at Jones' Landing on the James river, a little below and on the bank opposite Aikens' Landing. As the term of service of the officers and of most of the enlisted men expired on the twenty-eighth, we had received orders to draw out from the line of works to enable us better to make out the necessary papers connected with our muster-out; and we had been encamped here a week or two. Having occasion to visit Corps Headquarters, some three miles from the James river, on the twenty-sixth, I found all the troops that could be spared from the works,

massed in rear preparatory to some movement, whither or with what object the commanding officers only knew, and they were not disposed to be communicative. Never having been near where an action was taking place in which our battery did not participate, or at least expect to, I determined, if a possible excuse could be found, to follow and to be a looker on. Returning to camp I found Major William Monroe, Allotment Commissioner from Rhode Island, paying the men their State bounty then due. He remained over night, and in the morning, after taking him in my ambulance to Bermuda Hundred, where he took the Norfolk boat, I returned to camp, had my horse saddled, and with an excuse in the shape of a muster-roll, which the Commissary of Musters had notified me it would be necessary for him to see before approving the officers' applications for muster-out, I started for headquarters, accompanied by an orderly ; neither of us with arms of any description.

Arriving at the ground where the troops had been massed the day previous, I found they had started at daybreak, and, learning about the direc-

tion they had gone, I followed, hoping to overtake them by noon. Riding some five miles, we came to a brigade of our cavalry drawn up in line at a cross-road, a squadron or two of which were evidently ready to charge down one of the roads. I halted here a few moments talking with some acquaintances in the First New York Mounted Rifles, (better known in our corps, at least, as "Mounted Robbers"), and after making some inquiries as to the whereabouts of Corps Headquarters, without getting anything definite, except that it was ahead, rode on. Some five hundred yards from these troops the road branched to the left, and as it seemed to have been travelled most recently in that direction, I concluded it was the one taken by the corps I was in pursuit of and turned down, having inquired of stragglers whom we overtook on the road as to how far the corps was ahead, etc., with rather poor success. Seeing two mounted men approaching, and supposing them to be orderlies from some headquarters, I thought that at last we should learn something definite; and we did. When within a pace or two, and just about to speak to them, you can imagine I was

somewhat astonished at receiving the order, "Halt! Surrender!" backed by a double-barreled shot-gun and Spencer rifle. The road at this point was quite narrow, fenced on each side, and although within easy gunshot of our cavalry, it was completely hidden from them by a narrow strip of woods and a bend in the road. To turn back was to be shot, unless a miracle should save us; to go ahead I knew was to Richmond and a rebel prison. However, I had little time to weigh the chances, which I thought then, as I do now, were in favor of the latter.

Ordering us to ride on in front at a canter, our captors followed at the same gait for perhaps a quarter of a mile, when one of them, riding alongside, requested me to show him my watch; this I declined to do and he dropped back without a word. After riding a short distance further, we turned down a cart-path in the woods, and in a little while met two more of those scouts, as they call themselves. Here the individual anxious to possess my watch, again came alongside, ordered us to halt, and deliberately cocking and presenting a pistol to my head, remarked, "Now I'll take that watch." Of

course I was unable to resist such persuasion as this, so handing him the watch I remarked that it was a valuable one, and asked him to take good care of it. He assured me that he would, and he has—such good care that I have not seen it since. These other two had several prisoners whom they had captured, among others the orderly of the Medical Director of our Corps, who told me that the Medical Director had been captured on the very road on which I had been taken, while looking for a place to park his ambulances. Although I wished no harm to the "Doctor," yet I felt a little better on finding that others had gone before on the same road as myself.

The entire party waited here in the woods for two more of their number whom they had left lying in ambush on the main road, and whose horses they had in charge. It was while thus waiting that I began to realize our situation, and a more disagreeable one can hardly be imagined. I was soaked to the skin by a cold rain, which had commenced falling early in the day, and which was now pouring down as though we were about to have another flood; had had nothing to eat since the day previous,

The first of these is the fact that the
 country was a very fertile one, and
 the soil was very rich. The second
 fact is that the climate was very
 warm, and the people were very
 happy. The third fact is that the
 people were very brave, and they
 were very strong. The fourth fact
 is that the people were very
 intelligent, and they were very
 kind. The fifth fact is that the
 people were very honest, and they
 were very true. The sixth fact
 is that the people were very
 generous, and they were very
 kind. The seventh fact is that
 the people were very brave, and
 they were very strong. The eighth
 fact is that the people were very
 intelligent, and they were very
 kind. The ninth fact is that the
 people were very honest, and they
 were very true. The tenth fact
 is that the people were very
 generous, and they were very
 kind.

though to tell the truth I was not hungry ; had been relieved of what few valuables I had, as in addition to my watch they had kindly consented to take charge of any stray greenbacks that chanced to be in my pocket-book ; and added to all this was the prospect that instead of reaching home in a few days as I had expected, a dreary and in all probability long confinement was before me. Some of the stories which I had but a short time before read in the papers, of the horrors of life in Andersonville and other southern prisons, came fresh to my mind and were not encouraging ; still, seeing that there was no help for it, I resolved to put as good a face on the matter as possible.

After waiting some two or three hours, and finding that the dismounted men did not arrive, our captors started with us for a point at which it seems they had agreed to meet should they get separated. This was the house of a poor white farmer whom we found, together with his wife and two daughters, at home. They manifested very little concern at receiving such a number of visitors, and the daughters, both of whom were quite pretty, declined to have

any conversation with a "Yank," and little with anyone, for that matter. The house was situated in rear of the new line of our troops, and picket firing along the lines could be distinctly heard during the greater part of the night. From this circumstance I had hopes that some stray party of our forces might discover and recapture us; but towards morning the firing slackened and this hope left me.

About nine o'clock in the evening quite a stir was made by the arrival of the expected party with several prisoners, mostly sick or stragglers from our forces. One of them, whose presence gave great joy, as much to me, perhaps, just then, as to anyone, was an under-cook of an infantry company with five days' rations of coffee and sugar for his company. This was a god-send indeed to the party,—cold, wet, and hungry as all were. The old farmer and his wife, who probably had not tasted either coffee or sugar since the commencement of the war, suddenly remembered that they had a small piece of bacon and some sweet potatoes, which they would like to exchange. These were soon smoking on the table, and being an officer, after some deliberation I was

invited to take hold and help myself. Feeling by this time quite hungry, I was not slow in availing myself of the privilege. The rest of the prisoners, most of whom had rations in their haversacks, had a cup of coffee given them.

After supper I had some conversation with one of our guards and learned a little something of them. Their regiment was known as Hampton's Legion, (South Carolina), and was attached to Gary's Cavalry Brigade,—on duty in the vicinity of Richmond. As they had scouted in this part of the country during General McClellan's Campaign on the Peninsula, and were familiar with all the roads, they were now occasionally allowed to go on a scout near our lines for the purpose of picking up any information or stragglers, and unfortunately for me, they were out for this purpose on the twenty-seventh of October. The party numbered six, all privates, though one of them was recognized as a sort of leader of the rest, and his orders were generally obeyed without question.

We quartered during the night in the negro shanties of the farmer, two of the party standing guard over

us. Before sunrise we were on the road to Richmond. The weather, though pleasant, for it had cleared during the night, was rather cool at that early hour, which made it very uncomfortable for us, our clothes not having dried much as yet. The course taken I should say was north-westerly, and it was the intention of the leader to pass through White Oak Swamp, supposing that the right of our lines extended to that neighborhood. They all seemed perfectly familiar with every crook and turn of the roads and paths, and from the time we started until we struck the "Nine Mile Road," near Fair Oaks, having travelled certainly fifteen miles, we were not on a main road except to cross it. Crossing the railroad at Savage's station we were halted. It was then noon, and some of the party bargained with the people living there for a peck of sweet potatoes, paying forty dollars for them, of course in Confederate money. These were cooked in the negro quarters, and with a cup of coffee from our cook we made a good dinner. This was my last meal outside of a prison for nearly four months.

After dinner the march was resumed and we passed through the swamp, on emerging from which two scouts were observed, who, after considerable signalling, allowed us to approach them, being rather suspicious of our blue coats. From them was learned the fact, that our forces had retired during the night, and that Gary's Brigade had followed them. This determined the leader to send two of the party with us to Richmond, while he with the remainder rejoined their regiment. I had little to complain of from these men, much less than I expected. With the exception of my watch and money, nothing was taken from me, although I had a gold pin, which to them must have been quite valuable, and an entire new suit of clothes purchased in Norfolk but a few days before, any article of which would have been a welcome addition to their wardrobe. As we approached Richmond some care was taken by our guards to avoid passing near any prominent works; still we could see that the lines, although thinly manned with troops, were very formidable. Following the "Nine Mile Road," from the point on which we struck it, until we had passed through the

first line of works, we turned to the left over a corduroy road in rear of this line, down which we went until near Rocket's Landing, a suburb of Richmond, when we passed through the second line and arrived at the camp lately occupied by Gary's Brigade. Here my orderly and myself were compelled to dismount—for we had been allowed to ride the entire day—and after some delay we were all marched to Libby Prison, arriving there about sundown.

Just before reaching Rocket's, my orderly whispered to me that he had sixty dollars which one of the men in camp had placed with him for safe keeping, and asked me to take a part of it. I consented to do so, and he handed it to me without attracting the attention of our guard. I supposed then that the money prisoners had would not be taken from them by the prison authorities, but in this was woefully mistaken.

We were compelled to wait outside of Libby for some time, there being other prisoners ahead of us, but were finally admitted to the office. Here I had to part from my orderly, and it was with many misgivings, for having picked him out from among my

men as too young and light to perform the heavy work required in a battery, I scarcely expected that he would survive the fare and treatment of a rebel prison; and blaming myself, as I did, for our capture, I felt that if he should die, his death would properly be chargeable to me.

A record of my name, date and place of capture, etc., was entered in a book kept for that purpose, and I was sent into another room to be searched for money and any concealed weapons which might be on my person. The officer having charge of this requested me, if I had any money, to give it up and it would be placed to my credit until I was transferred from there, when it would be returned; otherwise if on searching any was found, it would be confiscated—for whose benefit he did not say. I handed him the thirty dollars which my orderly had given me, and on assuring him that I had no more, nor any concealed weapons, was removed to the officers' prison in the next story. It might be well to remark that somebody still owes me thirty dollars, unless it is considered as balancing four months' board, although I think that amount, judi-

ciously expended, would have kept me four months longer on the same fare and the balance then be in my favor.

The building known as Libby is a two story and a half brick block, situated in the business part of the city of Richmond, and was built, I believe, for a tobacco warehouse. It is divided into stores connected with each other by double iron doors set in brick partitions. These stores have a row of wooden posts, a foot or more in diameter, braced so as to sustain immense weight, running through the center in each story. The entire block, with the exception of the lower story of the western store, which was used as offices and quarters for the guard, was filled with prisoners. Officers were confined in the other two stories of the west end. Access from the lower to the second story was had by means of wooden steps, which, after being used, were immediately lowered to the floor by a pulley and communication cut off. All glass had been removed from the grated windows, and canvas screens substituted. These being worn and torn, and in some cases absent entirely, formed but poor protection against the

winds, which at this time were quite cool. The interior was bare of furniture, excepting a long pine table to eat from, and two cast-iron wood-stoves; for each of these we were allowed one armful of wood per day, just enough to keep a fire. I don't believe that at any time while I was there it would have been uncomfortable to sit on either stove on account of heat. How much they could impart to a building with open windows, for it was necessary during the day, at least, to have part of the screens down to give us light, can readily be imagined. Most of us had to lie on the bare floor, though a few fortunate individuals had blankets. These were very desirable articles, but the owners soon found that they were not to be the only occupants, having to share them with a little creature, who, although not taking up much room, made it quite uncomfortable for his bed-fellows. Still with this drawback they were eagerly sought for. I managed to get a piece of one, lively too, just before leaving Libby, but was not allowed to carry it away.

Reveille was sounded about six o'clock in the morning, by a drum band made up from some of our

colored soldiers, who were prisoners, and this was followed in about fifteen minutes by roll-call. For this we fell in, in four ranks, and instead of calling a roll we were counted by the Prison Inspector, "Dick" Turner. After counting, the rooms were carefully searched and then ranks were broken. Any claiming to be sick were examined by the Inspector, and if he thought necessary sent to hospital. Rations were issued shortly after roll-call. They consisted of a piece of corn-bread about three inches long, two wide, and perhaps one inch thick, with a pint of what they called bean soup—black beans boiled in water and seasoned with a little salt, and during the six days that I spent in this prison, I don't believe that one sound bean ever strayed into my ration. The inside of the beans had been eaten by small black bugs, who were still at work when put in the pot. Many could not eat this soup at all, and were forced to subsist on the ration of corn-bread. Being blessed with a good appetite, as well as a pretty strong stomach, I managed to eat my own rations as well as those of some others, who required a gradual breaking in. Nothing more was received

until three or four o'clock in the afternoon, when the breakfast bill of fare was again presented, with sometimes two or three ounces of fresh beef as a substitute for the beans. I need not say that the substitute was a welcome one. Those who had smuggled a little money through were enabled to add some trifles to their bill. Searching my pockets thoroughly a day or two after my entrance I found about a dollar in scrip, which one of the negroes, who helped sweep the room, had the kindness to take out and get changed into Confederate money, receiving therefor five dollars. This I soon invested, buying two onions at a dollar each, some rice which I believe was worth nearly one dollar per pound, a clay pipe and a pound of smoking tobacco—the latter was the only cheap article in the Confederacy, the best costing one dollar per pound at that time.

Our only amusements were walking and smoking; for knowing that our stay in Richmond would be short, and feeling as all new prisoners will, rather blue, we had no ambition to get up any amusements. Those who had been proprietors of blankets a short time had something to keep them busy an hour or

two a day, although it could hardly be classed under the head of amusements.

On the evening of the second of November two days' rations were issued, and we were informed that sometime during the night we would start for a prison depot further South. These rations consisted of three or four ounces of rotten bacon, so rotten that it might have been eaten with a spoon, and the smell of which nothing in the world ever equaled, a small dried haddock, and the usual allowance of corn-bread. I have said that I was blessed with a pretty strong stomach, but this bacon was too heavy for it, and with some difficulty I traded it for more haddock. About two o'clock in the morning we were treated to a serenade by "Turner's Band." They played but one air, the "Long Roll," at which we fell in, were counted, and with the exception of several non-combatants, surgeons and chaplains, who were to be paroled, we were marched through the deserted streets of Richmond, across the bridge to Manchester, where a train of cars awaited us. Here we found a large number of enlisted men also taking passage. All were carefully guarded, so that to

escape was impossible. It was daylight before all were aboard and the train made up. If the members of the "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" could have seen that train they would never complain of over crowded cattle cars. These were ordinary box cars, with no windows, only two doors, and but one of these open, which was protected by a grating, and each car was crowded with full sixty human beings. Two guards were stationed inside and six on top of each car. As we had nothing on leaving Richmond in which to carry water, and having eaten quite freely of our dried haddock, our sufferings from thirst soon became intolerable, and had the train not stopped occasionally and the guard allowed one or two to get water from the ditch alongside the track we would soon have been desperate. We arrived at Danville, Virginia, which it seems was our place of destination, during the following night, but were confined in the cars till daylight. How quickly we obeyed the order to turn out, and how good the fresh, cool air felt and tasted to us, after twenty-four hours in hot, crowded and filthy cars, no one can know unless placed in a similar situation.

The prisons were not far from the depot, so that it took but a short time to march to them. On arriving at the door and being admitted it would be difficult to describe our reception. Some three or four hundred men—for few, either from their appearance or dress, could be called officers—met us at the head of the first flight of stairs shouting, “Fresh fish.” “Here they come.” “Don’t hit him.” “Let his hat alone.” “Keep your hands out of his pockets,” and the like. My first impression was that we were in a penitentiary and that most of the prisoners were rebel convicts, with a small scattering of Union officers, but finding that, notwithstanding the noise, nothing happened to us, I began to look about and soon discovered several friends; to one of them, an officer of my own regiment, I attached myself, he kindly volunteering to show me the ropes.

The officers’ prison was called number three, and like Libby, had evidently been built for a tobacco warehouse. The interior was also similar, except, that standing alone, it admitted light from all sides. The rooms in which prisoners were confined, (the

second and third stories), had windows containing glass, but the lower story, where two or three sentinels were stationed, and where we were allowed to walk during daylight for exercise, had windows without glass, and, although boarded up half way, they afforded ample play for the cold winds, which made it very uncomfortable lying without blankets on a single board floor, with cracks almost wide enough to let us through. Our room was heated by two of the oldest fashioned cylinder stoves that I ever saw, and for fuel we had a poor bituminous coal, brought to Danville by canal from the interior of the State. When our stock of this was exhausted, four of us were allowed to go to the pile for more, a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile, under charge of two sentinels. It required an hour or two of hard work in the frozen dust and slate to fill our box, which we carried stretcher fashion. These stoves heated the room very imperfectly, owing to the poor quality of the coal, the thickness of the stoves, the cracks in the floor, and the circle that usually congregated around them, sometimes four or five deep. This circle was generally quite good natured,

and hailed the arrival of anyone to its inner rank, whether by strategy or otherwise, with the shout, "Another man made happy." A large number seldom visited the inner circle, but managed to keep warm, when it was very cold, by moving at a double quick around the room, one after another. This was good exercise, and when warm we remained so for some time, while those who hugged the stove most, were the coldest when away from it.

A great variety of uniforms were observable, few having an officer's dress entire. Nearly all had some article of grey, and some had full suits; others had little enough of any kind. There being a ready market in our guard for anything we had to sell, in the shape of boots, clothes, watches, buttons, jewelry, etc., everything of that kind that could be dispensed with, and some that could not well be, had been disposed of. I had several merchantable articles, and my friend volunteering to exchange them at current rates, I placed them at his disposal. A pair of boots brought one hundred and twenty dollars; a necktie ten dollars; and a pair of black kid

gloves twenty dollars. (My pants were traded for a pair of second-hand shoes and another pair of pants—grey.) With the money thus obtained we bought from the guard, who smuggled them in at night, and probably made a handsome profit themselves, a peck of beans at forty dollars; a peck of Irish potatoes, about the size of walnuts, at forty dollars; two or three pounds of salt, which at that time cost us but fifty cents a pound, though it afterwards touched a dollar; several pounds of flour, for thickening our bean soup, at eighty cents per pound; this also rose nearly out of sight, costing as high as two dollars and a half per pound; and six little red peppers, for five dollars, to season with. Having nothing to cook in, we bought three shares in a mess-pan, at two dollars per share. There were twenty shares in the pan, owned by different individuals. Those of whom we purchased had run out of extra provisions, and hence had no need of cooking utensils. Our buying three shares gave us a larger control of the pan and enabled us to crush out smaller competitors.

While these lasted we lived in clover, but "when

we died we died all over." They gave out at last, and we were forced to sell our shares in the pan to more fortunate individuals, and fall back on our regulars.

In cooking beans, they were in the first place hung in a tin cup against the stove until boiled sufficiently, then taken down into the yard, more water and the potatoes added, and with a few chips picked up while out for water, boiled until cooked. Chips were rather scarce and it cost considerable labor to keep a supply. I have seen an officer, who at home had probably never split a piece of wood in his life, beg a log which the guard had rejected as too tough and knotty for their axes, and with nothing but about six inches of a broken scythe and a stone, work all day splitting off enough to cook a cup of coffee made from a crust of burnt bread. The rations here, as at Libby, were principally corn-bread. Bean soup was not so plentiful, nor was fresh beef. The day's ration of corn bread was always issued in the morning, and soup or beef, when we had any, in the afternoon.

Previous to their arrival at Danville, the officers

had been confined at Salisbury, North Carolina, where they were quartered in small houses or barracks. These houses each appointed commissaries to draw and issue rations to the messes, of which there were several in each house. For convenience this organization was still preserved. Rations for all were issued under supervision of the commissary of the entire building.

The cook-house for the prisoners was nearly opposite, and could readily be seen from our windows and many longing eyes were cast on it. An officer looking out one day, when we knew we were to have bean soup, suddenly exclaimed, "Don't you see those fat hogs scratching themselves against the cook-house fence?" pointing to two or three sickle-backs, of which it is said it takes two to make a shadow, who were engaged in the occupation peculiar to their race, scratching, an operation which most of us indulged in freely. Bean soup was the basis of many good jokes; it was hardly solid enough to be the basis of anything else.

Considerable excitement was raised by the rebel commissary sergeant informing us one morning that

we were to have pork and beans issued to us in the afternoon. Visions of the old-fashioned New England Sunday breakfast rose rapidly before us, especially those who had had experience with them at home, only to be widely dispelled by the reality. At the usual hour, "Buckets for soup" was called. They were sent out. Their return was anxiously awaited by a large number congregated in the lower story to get the first sight. Bucket after bucket came in, presenting the ordinary appearance, until nearly twenty—our usual allowance—were before us, when it was discovered that what had been taken for scum in one of the pails was really a piece of pork. It was fished out with a stick, and a dozen or so, after weighing it carefully in their hands, and looking at it fondly with their eyes, placed its weight at inside of a pound and a half. What a rich treat for four hundred hungry men. However, it was divided into six pieces, one to each house. In our house the messes drew lots for it, and the end was, one man ate the ration of pork for sixty, and lived; at least that didn't kill him.

We were allowed plenty of drinking water, which

we brought ourselves, in the same buckets that were used for soup, from a spring some two or three hundred yards from the prison, and about the same distance from the river Dan, from which the town takes its name. Any one wishing to go for water would procure one or two empty pails, and cry out, "Buckets for water," which usually brought a dozen or more, when the sergeant of the guard being informed through a sentinel, would send two of his guard with the party, after counting them.

We were early risers from necessity, the cold forcing us up long before nature had satisfied her demand for sleep. When the sun had risen and in a measure warmed the building, and rations had been issued and eaten, the real business of the day was commenced. This was a searching examination of every particular seam and thread in our clothes, from head to foot, for vermin, which was plentiful, and from the visitation of which none were exempt. It would have been a comical sight to an outsider to have looked in upon us any pleasant morning, about nine o'clock—the floor literally packed with men, squatted tailor fashion, studying some article of their

clothing as intently as ever school-boy studied his book.

For amusements we had chess and checker playing—the men made of wood; card playing, with one or two packs of dirty and hardly legible cards; smoking, walking, laughing, singing and talking. The latter, better known among us as “chin,” was certainly the most prolific source of amusement. Any report from the guard, or or that some one had seen in a rebel paper an article on exchange of prisoners, especially if the paper was produced, was sufficient to cause the wildest excitement, and a buzzing probably as great as that at the building of the Tower of Babel. An item of two or three lines often formed the basis for a week’s “chin.” Numbers whiled the time away by manufacturing bone-work, of which I saw some very beautiful specimens, in the shape of rings, napkin-rings, breastpins, etc., rivalling any made by those having all the necessary tools. I tried my hand at making a ring from a piece of bone found in my ration of meat, but after rubbing it all one day on a brick, to reduce it to the proper thickness, with

little visible effect, gave up in disgust. Of course in such a large body of men, there were some fine singers, who favored us, when in the mood, with some excellent singing. That which suited me best, was, when some one, after we had lain down and were waiting for sleep to come, started "Rally Round the Flag," "John Brown," or some other song with a good chorus. This would be taken up by the whole of us, up stairs and down, and sounded grand, even to our rebel guard, who appreciated the music if not the words.

There were but few escapes from this prison, and for pretty good reasons. We were securely guarded by a chain of sentinels, who, during the night, were obliged half-hourly to call the number of their post, and "All's well." Our distance from the Union lines, the nearest point of which it was feasible to attempt reaching being Plymouth, North Carolina, and the distance by the roads we should have been obliged to take, nearly two hundred miles, and the almost total want of boots or shoes, many having nothing but the tops of their boots tied on for soles, deterred the few who had the opportunity to try. Still four

or five made the attempt, and, I believe, with success. The road for escape was discovered by accident. A number were out for water, and on returning, while stopping to rest, one of the party stepped into a wood shed, in front of which they had halted, to pick up some chips. The guard, not noticing his absence, ordered the party to move on, which they did, some one picking up his pail. After dark he probably started for our lines. The discovery of this road led to the finding of another, somewhat similar. In going for water, as I have before said, a dozen or so, with one or two pails, as they pleased, were allowed to go, under two sentinels. Between the prison and spring, there was a very steep decline of perhaps twenty feet, at the foot of which was quite a large oven for baking the moulds used in a foundry alongside for casting shot and shell, and a few feet in front of this foundry ran a canal, spanned by a very rickety foot bridge, that required all our eyes in crossing. A prisoner having determined to make the trial, would ascertain the condition of the oven, and if it had not been used, towards night get a party to go for water, having arranged beforehand

with them how to manage. On passing out some one would attract the attention of the Sergeant, to prevent counting, if possible, and having fairly started, another would engage the guard in rear in conversation, causing him to move slow and scattering the party pretty well. The foremost guard on arriving at the bridge had all he could attend to while on it, and this gave the opportunity to the individual proposing to leave, who, handing his pail to a friend, would quietly step into the oven before the rear guard arrived at the edge of the hill. This mode of escape was not always available, as we sometimes had a cross-grained Sergeant of the guard who persisted in doing his duty and counting us. Of course if there was any suspicion among us that we had been counted, it was risking the exposure of our plan to attempt it.

Just after dark on the evening of February sixteenth, the Commanding Sergeant came into our rooms, struck a light, and read to us a dispatch from Richmond, to the Commander of prisoners at Danville, directing him to forward next day, one-half his prisoners for exchange, and the balance the day

after. Most of us had lain down, but in an instant everyone was on his feet shouting, cheering, laughing, talking, and maybe some crying for joy. There was little sleep the remainder of that night—once in a while a lull, generally followed by a storm. The order read one-half the prisoners, and applied to officers as well as enlisted men. It was not given out until next day how this selection was to be made, and each hoped to find himself among the fortunates. In the morning, the prison Adjutant came in and notified us that all those whose names were included between the letters A and M would go. This put a damper on some of us, and made me wish I had been born an Angell, or even a Bird; but we consoled ourselves with the reflection that we would be but a day behind. About one o'clock roll was called, and on answering to their names, the fortunates started for the depot, bearing our good wishes. Those of us who were left set to work cleaning up a little, and had nearly finished, when we were amazed by seeing the entire party return. Nothing was known as to the cause, and many surmises were made, the most discouraging of

course. Late in the evening an order came for all to hold themselves in readiness, followed by the order to march to the depot, and on arriving there, we found half a dozen trains waiting. The delay had been caused by some accident above Danville, and led to the accumulation of empty cars enough to accomodate all. Few guards were sent with the train, and they paid us little attention, allowing us to get on or off as we pleased, and to ride on top. The cars, although nearly as crowded as when we went down, were thus rendered quite comfortable.

We arrived at Manchester about noon the next day, and after a delay of several hours, the train crossed the bridge and entered the city. Here occurred a comical scene. The cars no sooner stopped, than all of us, paying no attention whatever to the guard, jumped off and started for Libby, each anxious to get there first and secure a good place. None had any thought to escape, yet it was after dark before the entire party were inside the walls. A number finding that they were too late to secure good positions, spent the time in wandering around the city, until warned by darkness and the

provost guard that it was time to make arrangements for sleeping.

Next morning, boxes sent by our friends in the North, and which had accumulated to the number of nearly a hundred, were distributed after an inspection, and Libby was at once transformed into a vast cook-house. A couple of bricks taken from the walls and placed anywhere on the floor—there were no chimneys—with a few chips split off the boxes, gave us the opportunity to cook and eat our first square meal in nearly four months. These boxes contained a little of everything, and evidently reflected the taste of their owners. An old officer near me had ten or twelve pounds of lard—nothing else; another had all flour, others a variety of everything from a ham to a bottle of medicine. Knowing that we should remain but a day or two, and determined not to leave anything for the Johnnies, quite a general distribution took place, those having boxes sharing with their less fortunate friends. By eating too much, and from the dense smoke of so many fires, numbers were made sick, causing quite a run on medicines. Boxes of Spencer's pills, (genuine too,

sent by Mr. Spencer to his son, who was one of us), castor oil, and other searchers, disappeared rapidly and to good purpose.

On the twentieth we signed our paroles, and on the morning of the twenty-second, (Washington's birthday), we started for Rocket's Landing to take the flag of truce boat, first destroying everything belonging to us that was destructible and which might prove of any value to the rebels. Arriving at Rocket's, a boat was found awaiting us, and there was little delay in getting aboard, each one seemingly afraid that he might get left. The day was delightful, and moving rather slowly, we had a fine opportunity to view the rebel's works along the shore of the James, and the several iron-clads at anchor in it. The distance from Richmond to Bulwer's Landing, our destination, was but about seven miles, though it took an hour to steam there. Here was found Colonel Mulford, having charge of exchange on the Union side, who held a short conversation with Colonel Ould, acting in the same capacity for the rebels, after which we were allowed to disembark, a privilege of which we were not long in

availing ourselves. No time was lost in making for our picket lines, which could be seen a short distance up the hill. All cheering was done on the run. I felt like hugging our colored soldiers, who composed the picket, and might have done so but for the desire to put as great a distance between myself and Richmond in as short time as possible. From Bulwer's to Aiken's Landing is full two miles, and long ones they were to us who were so unused to walking. At Aikens we found our flag of truce boat waiting for us. Several hours were consumed in bringing over the sick and the weak in ambulances, during which time we received a serenade from the band of a cavalry regiment. I also heard from my battery, which was stationed a short distance from the landing, but was unable to visit it.

Late in the afternoon, Colonel Mulford arriving with the last of our men, lines were cast off, and the boat steamed down the James, bound for Annapolis, where was located a large parole camp. Here we were detained several days waiting for our "leaves of absence," which at last arrived and we started for home. While walking through the streets of Annap-

olis one morning, I was very agreeably surprised at meeting my orderly, (carpet-bag in hand and bound North), from whom I had heard nothing since parting from him in Libby. He looked quite well, and told me that although once detailed with a party to go South, he had never left Richmond until paroled.

This ends the sketch of my four months' experience, and I have endeavored to present it without exaggeration. That it was short, comparatively, and not very severe, you can readily see, and yet it was long and severe enough to enable me to form some idea of the suffering of our poor fellows at Andersonville and elsewhere. I have not mentioned, nor can anyone who has not himself been through some such experience imagine, our sufferings from hunger. Although the rations were sufficient to keep soul and body together, yet they never fully satisfied the craving for food. This craving showed itself in all our conversation and affected all our dreams.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,
BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THIRD SERIES—No. 3.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
1881

PROVIDENCE PRESS COMPANY, PRINTERS.

GUN-BOAT SERVICE

ON THE

JAMES RIVER.

BY

WILLIAM B. AVERY,

[Late Acting Ensign, U. S. Navy.]



PROVIDENCE:

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY

1884.

GUN-BOAT SERVICE

ON THE

JAMES RIVER.

In June, 1863, having been mustered out of service in the army, I entered the navy as an acting ensign and was ordered to the frigate Savannah, at that time a school-ship for officers at the Brooklyn navy yard, and from which details were made to the different vessels fitting out for service, mostly on our southern coast and rivers.

Having already seen good service and being well posted in gunning, I was less green than most of the other officers, and in July, when the riots broke out in New York, was placed in charge of the detachment of sailors, with two twelve-pounder howitzers, detailed for duty at the custom-house in Wall street.

When no longer needed there, I was ordered to the gun-boat Adela for temporary service, and we cruised up North river to be ready to give assistance in case of any outbreaks in the smaller places on the Hudson. Our only real service consisted in hauling down a rebel flag which we discovered flying from a staff near Spuyten Duyvel creek, showing that there was still "one unloyal heart left" in that part of the north. Later in the season I was ordered to the Dawn, a gun-boat recently returned from blockade duty down on the coast near Fort Pulaski and in Ossabaw sound, and then refitting for further service wherever ordered.

Having already made up my mind to take my chances on a ship, that is, to go where ordered without endeavoring to get assigned to any particular vessel, I reported to the commanding officer and was soon acquainted with most of the other officers who were already attached. We went into commission, that is, received our crew on board and hoisted our colors, December 2, 1863, and on the ninth left New York for Hampton Roads to report for duty to Rear Admiral S. P. Lee, then commanding the North At-

lantic Blockading Squadron, to which we were to be attached. Putting a ship in commission is no small job, and embraces a good deal of work which has to be accomplished in a short space of time, especially if we are expected at once to go to sea. Even in a small vessel like ours, with only about one hundred men, it kept most of us officers busy and we had little time for farewells on shore, where, after some months' service at the navy yard, we had formed some pleasant acquaintances. Having, however, a good executive officer, who was not only a good sailor but had already had two years' experience in the navy under one of its crack old regular officers, the crew were soon stationed, the watch, quarter and fire bills all made out, and every man knew his place and duty on board the ship in a manner that did very well for the beginning of a cruise, but which was made much more perfect by the drill and discipline that immediately followed our departure. And now a word or two as to what and who we were. The vessel itself had been, previous to the war, a freight-steamer, plying between New York and New Bedford. She was purchased at the outbreak of the war

and altered into a gun-boat, and was about five hundred tons register, with a powerful engine and good boiler power, and she was more than ordinarily fast for a propeller. She had two masts, schooner rigged, with a square sail forward, and when refitted carried a battery of three rifled guns, one being an hundred pounder Parrott mounted amidships, the other two smaller, one forward, the other aft, and ready to work on either side. With the usual supply of muskets, pistols, cutlasses, boarding-pikes, etc., we were, take us all in all, quite a formidable craft for a little one; and when we consider that she could lie some three or four miles from a given point and drop one hundred pounder shells uncomfortably near it without much risk to ourselves, she was not a bad ship to be aboard of, I assure you. Then again, she was a comfortable boat, except in a seaway, and none are particularly nice there, especially propellers. The quarters for the men and officers were good and roomy, except that in winter they were cold, no way of heating by steam having then been devised, as was the case in the boats fitted out later in the war. An attempt was sometimes made in very cold weather

to heat the ward-room with a red-hot hundred-pound shot placed in a box of sand, but as a heater it was not much of a success.

We had a good condenser for supplying fresh water, however, and one of the very disagreeable restrictions of shipboard in general, viz., a limited supply of fresh water, was obviated, and there was never any lack of that article on board; and even when in fresh water we never used it except as it came from the condenser, well filtered and pure.

The officers were all acting volunteers and consisted of a lieutenant, commanding, who had been promoted for gallantry in an iron-clad before Charleston, a master as executive officer, three ensigns and a master's mate for watch officers, all of whom wore a star on the coat sleeve above the stripes indicative of rank, to show that they were line officers and on whom devolved the command of the ship according to rank whenever the senior line officers were absent. An assistant paymaster, assistant surgeon, second assistant engineer in charge, together with three third assistants, and the usual complement of steerage officers and a good crew of sailors, lands-

men and boys, but no marines. The captain, as the commanding officer is usually called, whatever his real rank may be, had a good cabin to himself and was attended by his steward and a boy. The ward-room belonged to the other commissioned officers, which was attended to by the ward-room boys, one for each two officers, besides a ward-room steward and cook, and was the largest cabin on board. The steerage officers had their own servants and mess; the petty officers had their mess and cook. Then there was the ship's cook for the men of the crew, who were divided into messes, each with its own mess cook, who looked after the mess chests and cloths, prepared and carried food to and from the galley where it was all cooked. One peculiar custom was the discharging of a pistol loaded with a blank cartridge only, by the quarter gunner, up the funnel of the galley stove every Friday evening at six bells; the object being to keep it clear of soot that collected in large quantities.

As a general thing we lived well, especially if the caterer for the mess was well up in his business and not too much restricted as to expense by the mess



treasurer. We in the ward-room were pretty generally single men, and not having any families to provide for at home, had rather heavy mess bills to pay ; but we believed in living while there, for we did not know how long we were to be allowed to remain, or to speak plainer, how soon we might be called for, as the enemy, especially when up the James river, did not always keep such a long distance off as before mentioned. But to return to our cruise. After a pleasant run down the coast we arrived at Hampton Roads on the twelfth of December and immediately received orders to proceed up the James river on picket duty near White Shoal lighthouse, and to watch for and intercept boats crossing at that place from the mouths of two creeks, one on either side of the river. This latter service in open boats and at night was not very pleasant work. There is no great degree of comfort cramped up in a boat all night in the middle of winter, watching noiselessly at the mouth of a creek, not too far inland and yet near enough to keep good guard so as to intercept any boat that may be trying to steal in or out ; but such was our work, night after night, till another vessel

took our place and we were relieved for a while. The very first night we had of it, the boat on duty on the opposite side of the river from the one I was guarding was fired into from shore and one of her crew hit and no less than fourteen bullet-holes made in her sides.

The man who was shot was a landsman and had only recently entered the service. His very first night near the enemy he was wounded, when there were others of us out that night and in the boat with him who had already been under fire a dozen times, perhaps, and had not received even a scratch. But such occurrences were common all through the war, and no doubt familiar to all of us. During one of our turns at picket duty up the river we met, March 27, 1864, the rebel flag of truce boat that brought down Judge Ould, the rebel commissioner for exchange of prisoners, whom we took down to Fortress Monroe to confer with those appointed for that purpose on our side, and the result of which conference was the releasing of a large number of our boys then languishing in southern prisons.

. During the oyster season we were stationed part

of the time off the mouth of the Nansemond to protect the fleet engaged in the business of taking oysters. It was our daily custom to make a tour of the fleet in a boat and let each oysterman throw a shovel-full of oysters into it, and by the time we had made the round of the fleet we were plentifully supplied for all hands on board.

One night while lying at anchor off Newport News a boat crept out from the rebel shore and succeeded in exploding a torpedo against the side of the flag-ship Minnesota, and though no material injury was done to the ship, it waked up the admiral to such an extent that he made it very uncomfortable for every one in the fleet by giving such strict orders that we hardly dared to close our eyes at night, for a time, lest we should be court-martialed and punished. A series of signals was established, different for different nights, consisting of colored lanterns to be displayed and whistles to be sounded, by which we were to distinguish friend from foe. The necessity for all the signals was that we were to keep under way at night, running about in a small space, and as often as we came near each other, we were to display

the proper colored lanterns the right number of times, they being kept ready for use in empty flour barrels; and give the requisite number of blasts with the steam whistle, which if not answered properly was to be the occasion of our opening fire at once from our batteries on the other vessel; and *vice versa*, in case we were in any manner remiss in regard to our business or in answering their signals. No one was allowed to remove his clothing at night—that is to say, we “turned in all standing,” and the men were kept almost constantly at the guns and on lookout. Such another whistling of steamers and display of lanterns was never before seen. The great wonder is that we did not fire into each other, and we would have done so in many instances, had we literally obeyed our orders. But when we felt morally certain we knew a vessel to be one of our own, we were hardly fools enough to fire into her, even if a red lantern was first shown instead of a yellow one, or two whistles blown in lieu of one, as we were passing, especially when we could often recognize the voice of the officer of the deck—or knew the peculiar sound of their whistle. But such vigilance soon ex-

hausted itself, and by the time we started up the river in the spring, all such nonsense had been dropped, and we turned in at the end of our watch on deck, and were soon as fast asleep as any of the soldiers on the near shore, where quite a number were encamped during the winter. We were detailed for quite a delicate service at one time during the winter, experimenting in sub-marine blasting. The inventor of a peculiar process of igniting the powder, was sent on board with his apparatus, and we moved up near the piling that had been placed as a barrier across the channel below Norfolk and through which only a narrow way had as yet been made, and did some very efficient work in removing those obstructions. As the difference in process only consisted in the different manner of causing an electric spark at the powder, I shall speak more at length of the general effect of a blast in connection with a sketch which I will give at the close of this paper.

Always glad of a change, and ever ready to put to sea, our wishes were gratified one night on the receipt of orders to proceed to sea and overtake and capture a tug-boat said to have escaped from the

Chesapeake Bay, and gone off on a piratical cruise. A close search along the coast and inlets north of Cape Charles for two or three days resulting in finding no pirates, we returned to our anchorage in the fleet; but were soon off again up Chesapeake Bay for Baltimore, with the disabled steamer Ceres in tow for repairs. Shortly after this we towed an ordnance schooner down to Hatteras Inlet, where we learned of the death of Captain Flusser and the success of the ram Albemarle. Shortly after our return from this last trip and early in May, the fleet moved up the James river with the advance of General Butler. Different gun-boats were stationed along the river at intervals, and we were detailed to take station off Wilson's wharf, where a considerable body of troops were landed; we to form one of the cordon of gun-boats whose duty it was to keep open the entire river for the safe passage of transports up and down. The next military station was at Fort Powhattan, some seven miles above, at a sharp bend of the river, and on the opposite or south bank. At both of these points the soldiers immediately fortified themselves, and under cover of the gun-boats were soon well intrenched.

To those whose first trip up the river this was, it must have been quite an eventful day, but to us who had been running up and down more or less all winter, it was rather a tame affair, though by order all hands were at quarters, and ready to begin battle at any time. The only real duty we were called upon to perform, was landing a party of soldiers and assisting to capture a signal-station a short distance below our station. This service was successfully accomplished and reflected considerable credit upon the colored troops who were engaged in it, especially as it was their first undertaking before the enemy.

Though nominally stationed off Wilson's Landing, we were at liberty to go anywhere we could be of service. If firing opened above or below us, we at once got under way and went for it. We covered about twenty miles of the river and were moving about considerably.

The troops on shore soon had themselves well entrenched. These consisted of a colored brigade under General Wilde—who had already lost an arm in the service ; some troops from New Hampshire—with at one time General Marston, and a light battery

from New York under Captain Wheeler ; and a good battery it was, too. We had many a fine ride on their horses, and they often came on board, where they always seemed to enjoy a good square meal, which to them, as to soldiers in general, seemed quite a luxury. Though the weather was hot, we had an abundance of ice for the trouble of getting it from an ice-house a few miles below, which the considerate owner of the plantation had filled for us during the winter when we were guarding the mouth of the river. Fruit was also plentiful and good, and of course we often risked capture in going too far from the river to get it. The mail-boats passed up the river daily, and the captains would tie New York and Washington papers to a stick and then toss them to our boat, which was manned and waiting to pick them up if they fell into the water. When dried on the large head of the cylinder of the engine, we would read the news of what was going on at the front and in other parts of the country, and probably find out the meaning of that heavy firing we heard two or three days before, or why it was we saw so many transports with troops going down or up the

river—which latter event was so continuous and varied, later in the season, that we termed it "Grant's circus," and were always speculating as to the various movements of the troops up and down. May 24th, 1864, the works on shore were attacked by dismounted cavalry under Fitz-Hugh Lee, and there was hot work for us that day. Having learned that two of the colored pickets had been murdered in cold blood during the night, we were not surprised when the attack opened, though it was in the middle of the day and all were not expecting it just at that time. It so happened that the captain and executive officer were both on shore at the commencement of the fight, and I was in command of the ship by virtue of my rank. As we afterwards learned, the force that attacked us consisted of some twenty-five hundred men with three pieces of artillery, and that just previous to so doing, General Lee sent a flag of truce to General Wilde with a demand for his surrender, with the information that if he did so, all would be treated as prisoners of war; if not, he should not be responsible for the manner in which they would be treated by his men. But General

Wilde, even with the memory of Fort Pillow fresh in mind, sent back word that he would "try it first," and the soldiers bravely bore him out in his determination. The rebels evidently thought they could walk right through those twelve hundred "niggers," even though they were behind their own works; but the sequel showed different. We went at once to quarters on hearing the long roll on shore, and by the time the captain reached the ship every thing was cleared for action. Awnings were furled, guns cast loose and provided, and anchor at the bow, which with a well drilled and willing crew is but the work of a few minutes. We all seemed to feel that there was work before us for that day. Out went the galley fire, and the half cooked dinner for all on board was left unattended as the cooks hied to their stations on the berth deck, ready to pass powder from the magazine which had been opened by the gunner's mate, the keys of which had been brought from the captain's cabin, where they were always kept. The carpenter was on hand with his sounding line and shot plugs, and the master-at-arms had seen the fire tubs filled with water, over which the

empty passing boxes were to be shook to catch any fire that may have got into them before returning them to the magazine to be replenished. Whenever the magazine is opened the utmost precautions are necessary to prevent accidents which would at once result in our instant annihilation. Screens are put up around the hatch leading to it, and no one ever goes into it without first removing his shoes and putting on the magazine dress and putting away everything metallic he may have about him. Meantime, the ward-room has been converted into an hospital, and there stands the surgeon and his steward with their instruments spread out on the dining-table, ready to make a clean job of any jagged limb that may have been roughly amputated by a cannon ball. The paymaster is looking out for signals. The different officers are in command of their respective divisions—with us, each ensign having one gun and the master's mate having charge of the powder division. The executive officer takes the deck, and the captain has charge over all. All being in readiness on board, we proceeded at once to the point just below the fort and off the mouth of a ravine, which

position commanded a wood in front and to the right of our works on shore, the ranges of which we well knew, and which we at once shelled heavily. After a time, perceiving a party of the enemy occupying a point just above our works, annoying and preventing the landing of a steamer with reinforcements from Fort Powhattan, we ran over there and engaged them ; and for a short time had pretty lively work with them, our decks being very much exposed, especially for the men at the other two guns ; we only worked on the one-hundred-pounder at this place, not deeming it necessary needlessly to expose all the crews, and so effectual was our fire from that gun that after a few well-directed discharges into their midst they were soon glad to beat a retreat from the river bank and allow the steamer with the troops on board to make a landing. In her attempts to do this, she had been pretty severely handled by the riflemen on the shore, and several of the men were wounded and the pilot shot dead at the wheel. Acting Ensign ———, of the Pequot, being temporarily on board at the time, at once took the wheel and finally succeeded in getting her to the wharf.

Meantime the Pequot had run down from above and joined us in the fight against the rebels. By this time the battle was at its height. On shore the troops were doing their utmost to beat off the attacking columns, and we were both pounding away with our heavy batteries at our utmost. Whether we succeeded in killing many I cannot say, but I do believe we scared some of them pretty badly, for the moral effect of nine-inch and one-hundred-pounder shells had been well demonstrated long before that occasion. To judge from the appearance of the trees where the shell had ploughed through them, over and amongst the rebels, and the excavations in the ground made by their bursting, our firing must have had considerable to do with causing the enemy to withdraw, upon finding it impossible, after two or three assaults, to carry our works.

The troops in the fort fought with a determination never excelled. Knowing full well what to expect in case of defeat, they stood up nobly to their duty, and did fearful execution among the enemy, who must have suffered severely. Judging from the number of their dead left on the field, nearly thirty,

the wounded taken away with them must have been considerable. On our side in the works, the loss was four killed and twenty-five to thirty wounded.

With us on board ship the casualties were very light, and though it was in the middle of the day and very warm, none of us seemed to suffer seriously from the heat, except perhaps our captain, who had a sort of habit of going below when it began to get warm on deck, but that may have been only because he was used to fighting in an iron-clad, and preferred cover. But one thing he could do, and that was write good reports, and as a result we all got favorable mention for our conduct during the day, and some of us were recommended for promotion. That of the acting ensign of the Pequot came very soon, and well he deserved it, but the others were not so promptly attended to.

Somehow, later in the season we began to hear heavy firing to the north of us, and knew that General Grant and the Army of the Potomac were nearing us. Soon afterward the firing ceased altogether, and word came that a portion of the army were quite close, at Charles City Court House, and some of my

friends with the army sent greetings to me, by those who went out to visit them, but before I got a chance to go on shore, we moved up river to where the army crossed, near which place we lay until all were on the south side of the river.

About the first of August our captain was ordered to another vessel, but not to the command of it, however; leaving our ex-officer in command of the *Dawn*, and I, being next in rank, became ex-officer, which position I retained until the end of the cruise in June, 1865.

August third, being at anchor off Fort Powhattan, one of our gun-boats, the *Miami*, passed up the river, going above to report for duty. She had scarcely got out of sight around the bend, when we heard heavy firing in that locality, and getting at once underway, soon found her engaging a battery, which had opened on her from the north shore, where it had been laying in wait for some defenceless transport. The beauty of it was, however, that having mistaken the *Miami* for one, she being one of the double-enders, and without any top-masts standing, they caught a Tartar, so to speak.

Going at once to quarters, she proceeded to reply to their fire in a manner they were little prepared for, and by the time we had run into range and dropped a few of our shell into their midst, they were ready to draw off to the woods out of sight. They handled the Miami rather roughly, however, for two or three were killed and several of her crew wounded. She remained at anchor near there that night, and the next morning, soon after quarters, the battery again opened on the S. R. Spaulding on her way down the river, with wounded soldiers on board, and flying the hospital flag, and did some considerable damage before we succeeded in driving them away again.

From that time on we remained in that vicinity, and no more batteries on shore molested any of our transports. About this time, having received orders to rig out a torpedo netting ahead of us, I went on shore for the purpose of procuring the necessary timbers from a large warehouse standing near the water, when having started off the boats with two that we had obtained, I was surprised to see my picket running in, who informed me that a large body of cavalry were swooping down towards us, and not being

able to cope successfully with such a land force, we took to our boat at once, and very narrowly escaped capture. Of course, by the time we were out of their reach they were seen from the ship, and the latter opened on them at once with the guns; but had they come upon me unawares, all the guns in the navy would not have saved us from Libby prison that day. As it was, we not only succeeded in getting what we were after, but soon had two long girders rigged out ahead of us with a cross-piece, from which was suspended a large netting, which we kept lowered into the water to intercept any of those harmless looking things, which sometimes were sent floating down the river, and which were calculated to do mischief untold, in case one of them exploded under our bow. We caught one of them, and towed it ashore and buried it, without letting our curiosity get the better of our judgment, by trying too hard to learn of the particular construction of the fuse, as it had rusted in and did not readily yield to our efforts to unscrew it.

Part of our service about this time consisted in intercepting deserters from the army then in front of

Petersburg, who came down the river in all sorts of ways. Some on logs, some in batteaux, but mostly on shore walking along the river bank. In either case, we would at once down boats and after them, and generally succeeded in catching them, too.

On a certain occasion one of our men, in searching around for one he knew was not far off, accidentally fell into a hole right on top of his man, who had crawled into the hole, and, as they say down south, had "pulled the hole in after him." Not being able to repress a loud groan, when so much extra weight was precipitated upon him, he thereby discovered himself, and to our amusement was soon extricated and taken on board. They were generally well supplied with bounty-money, and as "jumpers" they met with little sympathy from any of our men. We turned them over to the provost-marshal at Harrison's Landing, by whom they were sent again to the front.

During the winter of '64 and '65, and late fall, we lay directly off the wharf at Harrison's Landing, and many a fine gallop did we have over the country on some of the battery horses, a section of which

was stationed there at this time. All the time we were within sound of the firing about Petersburg, and knew pretty well what was going on up there. Occasionally we could get a day off, and take a run up there and out on the railroad, and visit some of the camps, to see how the boys were getting on up nearer the enemy. We often run up to City Point and as far as we could get, on some pretext or other, always eager for the front and for something to do, though generally doing just as important and necessary service where we were.

Nov. 26th, 1864, Thanksgiving day, our surgeon, having become melancholy and deranged in mind, took the opportunity, while the captain was on shore and everyone else enjoying a sort of holiday, to shoot himself, and thus put an end to his life. Two of us were playing chess in the ward-room within three feet of his room door, when hearing the report we forced open the door and found him outstretched with a bullet-hole near his heart. He lingered along for more than a week before we could send him to the hospital, where he soon died from his wound. Though he had never been much of a favorite with

us, we could but mourn his loss and miss him from among us. The real cause of his melancholy we never were able to find out, though it had been coming on him for quite a little time, and exercise on shore, which we encouraged him to take oftener, did not seem to do him any good. During the summer we had received orders from our new Admiral, Porter, to give attention to the study of navigation, and to practice with the sextant and artificial horizon, and for a time we in the ward-room were all engrossed in mathematical calculations, and all our talk was of lunars and altitudes, azimuths and parallax, preparatory to a threatened examination which all were to undergo, but which few were ever called upon to pass through. Now this was in midsummer, and one of us had been recommended for promotion in the report upon the battle at Wilson's Landing, and he at least rather expected to be ordered for examination at once. But time rolled on and preparatory studies had long since been dropped and almost forgotten. It seemed as though all that cramming had been for nothing. During the winter, chess and backgammon were all the rage with us in the

ward-room. At times I had to be on deck nearly all night, as for ten days the ice formed quite heavily and it was necessary to keep backing around in a small space to prevent being frozen in fast, and amidst it all no thought was ever given to either examination or promotion. In fact, the whole business was to me getting rather dull and stupid, and I was very seriously considering whether I should not accept a captain's commission in the army again, which, as the result of some former correspondence upon the subject, had just been sent me by my old commander, Colonel Howard, then commanding the Thirteenth Artillery, New York Volunteers; when, one day, as all was quiet up at the front, and everything seemed more than ordinarily dull with us, along came orders for Acting Ensign William B. Avery, of the United States steamer Dawn, to report at once for examination for promotion on board the United States steamer Massasoit, then lying up near Dutch Gap Canal. Hastily gathering up my manual on gunnery, I jumped on board the despatch steamer and that night slept, or tried to sleep, on board the Massasoit. I say tried to sleep, for having been provided with a

cot, which was slung in the ward-room for me by one of the contrabands doing service as a ward-room boy, who made fast the lanyard to a hot steam pipe, by which it became so much weakened during the night that it gave way, at one end, and down I went—not on to the deck, however, but on to the table, over which it was slung. In that position I preferred to remain than rouse the steward on a strange ship, and passed the time in vainly endeavoring to give in detail the stations and duties of the crew of an eleven-inch pivot gun, manned by twenty-four men and a powder-man. Doubtless the anxiety in regard to the next day's ordeal had as much to do with my wakefulness as the inclined position of the cot, for immediately upon reporting on board, I found that nothing could be learned from any of the officers in regard to the extent or character of the examination. They were as mum and mysterious about it as though they had never heard of such a thing, but at the same time one knew how they were enjoying them at our solicitude on the subject. But I had little time to be annoyed at this, for the first thing after breakfast I was taken in hand by the doctor for

the physical examination, as though a man who was physically capable of being an ensign was not also good enough to be a master. Then I went before the board of examiners proper, and—well, they put me through everything for about five long hours,—from truck to keelson in regard to a ship, and from a, b, c, to French and Spanish concerning my literary attainments. Finally at the end, I was semi-officially informed that having received rather more than the necessary percentage, my examination was satisfactory and would be reported upon favorably, and that I might in due time expect my promotion. But alas! for expectations. That promotion never came to hand. Before those official records were forwarded by the senior officer, the rebel rams came down from Richmond, and among other things destroyed by them, or by the commanding officer from fear of them, was that report of my examination. I simply remark that the knowledge of the fact that he was afterwards court-martialed for cowardice on that occasion went a little way toward soothing my disappointed hopes and aspirations, and though I never added the stripe to my arm, the satisfaction of

having merited it was, to me, quite a source of gratification and pleasure.

During the early part of September, 1864, and while we were at the station off Wilcox's Landing, orders one day came for us to run down to Fortress Monroe, there to take on board Mr. Hayden, the sub-marine engineer, and proceed to sea in search of the bark Greenland, which was reported to be sunk some seventy-five miles southeast of Cape Henry, whose topmast heads were just out of water and dangerous to shipping. She was one of the victims of the rebel cruiser Florida, which had audaciously run up into our waters and sunk vessels almost under our very eyes. We went to see about dark, and having shaped our course about right, next morning shortly after breakfast we discovered the wreck as had been reported, and at once prepared to demolish it. While our vessel lay to at a safe distance, I took Mr. Hayden, with the powder and his battery, in our largest boat to the wreck itself, and proceeded to lower the powder in cans to the deck of the bark. There was quite a high sea at the time, and as we were desirous of planting the cans as near 'midships

as possible. It was considerable of a task on us, but we finally succeeded in placing both of them near the foot of the main-mast on her deck, and had all ready to move off. To each can ran two wires attached to the battery, and by bringing the ends together in the boat, closed the circuit and produced a spark in the powder, thus igniting it and causing it to explode. While at work it was surprising how clearly we could see the wreck at the bottom; and hovering above and about her were some twelve or fifteen large sharks, sailing around in the water, as though keeping guard over her, and ready to go for any one of us who might be so unfortunate as to fall overboard. The old salts in the boats shuddered as they looked down at them, and chuckled at the thought of what was in store for them, their inveterate enemy. As the bright tin cans were lowered into place, one of these grim monsters of the deep would approach and seem to survey them with a critical eye, and then move off to give place to another, who would do the same thing; and thus they kept moving about, all unconscious of what was about to happen, though seemingly suspicious, as they always are, of some

trap that may be placed for them. But we did not linger long to watch them, though the sight was extremely interesting. Having placed the cans to suit us, we rowed off and paid out the wires from the coils as we went. At first all went well, but shortly one of the wires fouled, and rather than run the risk of hauling the powder from its good position and thus destroy the effect of the blast, we decided, though still too near, to close the circuit and risk it. Immediately there arose an immense column of water just astern of us, and to the height of over one hundred feet, which in its descent deluged us all and partially filled our boat. Considering ourselves fortunate to escape without being swamped entirely, instead of receiving only a ducking, we bailed out our boat, proceeded to make fast a hawser from the ship, and returning on board towed the spars and floating fragments clear of the wreck, and felt well satisfied with our work. The blast had split the hull wide open, shattered all the spars to pieces, and either killed or scared to death all those sharks, for we could not see a live one anywhere, though we still kept a sharp look-out for them

as we cruised about. And this was only one of the many merchant and whaling vessels sunk by rebel cruisers during the war, and whose ribs are now rotting at the bottom of the ocean, the hiding places of the sharks and other denizens of the mighty deep.

Returning to our post up the river again, we felt refreshed from our run to sea and sniff of salt air; and entered once more on our fresh water duty, with renewed zeal and energy.

In the latter part of March our captain was ordered to another vessel, and a new captain, our third, was ordered to command the Dawn. At the same time we were ordered to Norfolk for a few slight repairs to our engine, after which we proceeded down to the coast of North Carolina, where we remained till the end of the cruise on blockade duty.

Having frequently been asked which I liked best—the army or the navy—perhaps a few words on that point may not be out of place in closing this paper. Aside from the natural taste of “a life on the ocean wave” that is almost inborn with many persons, I am rather inclined to the opinion that, generally speaking, the army is preferable to the navy. To a



person of an active turn of mind, life on board ship is terribly dull. The routine is monotonous, and the want of change is dispiriting. But when you come to solid comforts, then the navy looms up to advantage. No dust or mud, plenty of good food well cooked and served, and when one's watch on deck is over, a good berth to sleep in. But the knowledge of the fact that one has to turn out of a good warm berth at midnight to stand a four-hour watch in the storm on deck, often leads to the wish that it might be better to have all night in, even under a shelter tent on shore. But as for me, personally, having tried all three, give me the one having a mixture,—the comforts and delights of the navy, with the activity and excitements of the army,—The Marine Artillery.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,
BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THIRD SERIES—No. 4.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.

1884

PROVIDENCE PRESS COMPANY, PRINTERS.

A PRIVATE'S
RECOLLECTIONS of FREDERICKSBURG

BY

EUGENE A. CORY.

[Late Company E, Fourth New York Volunteers, and Company I, One
Hundred Fifty-ninth New York Volunteers.]



PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
1884.

[Edition limited to two hundred and fifty copies.]

A PRIVATE'S RECOLLECTIONS OF FREDERICKSBURG.

(Read before the Society, May 15, 1883.)

December, 1862, found the writer in camp, near the Warrenton Pike, some two miles above the town of Falmouth on the Rappahaunock river. He had enlisted in Company E, Fourth Regiment, New York Volunteer Infantry, upon the 22d of April, 1861, to serve two years unless sooner discharged. The Fourth New York Volunteers and the Thirty-eighth New York Volunteers were organized under President Lincoln's first call for 75,000 volunteers, by a veteran organization of the Mexican war, named the Scott Life Guards, of which association General Scott was president. The Fourth New York was known as the First, and the Thirty-eighth New York as the Second, "Scott Life Guards." All of our commissioned officers were veterans of the Mexican

war, as were most of our non-commissioned officers and many privates, owing to which advantage the regiment was, very early in the war, as well disciplined and drilled as many regiments after years of service. The writer was but sixteen years of age at time of enlistment, and at date of commencement of this narrative was an old soldier in service, although but a youth in years.

The Fourth New York was, during the entire winter of 1862-3, the extreme right regiment of the Army of the Potomac and together with the Tenth New York Volunteers, First Delaware Volunteers, and (a portion of the winter) the One hundred and thirty-second Pennsylvania Volunteers, composed the Third Brigade, Third Division, Second Corps, Sumner's Grand Division. Our brigade commander, General Max Weber, had been seriously wounded at Antietam, and never returned to his command, so that the brigade was for a portion of the winter under command of Colonel Bendix, of the Tenth New York, and part of the time of our Colonel, John B. McGregor, who had served gallantly through the war with Mexico, as an officer in the First New York

Volunteers. He was a gentleman, and a fine officer, always cool and self-possessed in action, and while no martinet, was strict and firm in maintaining discipline in his command. General French, our division commander, like General Couch who commanded the corps, is too well known to need any mention by me ; and General Edwin V. Sumner, who commanded the Grand Division, had made a name famous in the history of the Army of the Potomac, while in command of the second corps. The first division of our corps was commanded by that distinguished soldier, General Hancock, who had succeeded General Richardson, killed at Antietam ; and the second division by General Sedgwick, afterwards the famous commander of the sixth corps. All of us who served in the second corps feel a pride in the command which included among its generals such names as Sumner, Couch, Richardson, Hancock, Sedgwick, Weber and Meagher, and this *esprit du corps* will not grow less as time passes on, and the names become merely a memory.

We had left Bolivar Heights, Harper's Ferry,

(where we had encamped since the battle of Antietam), on the 30th of October, marched slowly down the Loudon valley, while the rebel army of General Lee was marching down the valley of the Shenandoah upon the other side of the mountain range. At Snicker's Gap, where we arrived on the 2d of November, just in time to prevent General Lee from taking possession, we had a magnificent view of the valley on the other side of the mountains, and saw the whole rebel army of Northern Virginia pass, as though in review. November 3d, arrived at Upperville, where we bivouacked until the 6th, and upon the 9th reached Warrenton. At this place, on the 10th of November, General Burnside relieved General McClellan of the command of the Army of the Potomac, and a grand review by both generals took place. We left Warrenton upon the 15th, and arrived at the Rappahannock river on the 17th, too late to occupy Fredericksburg without resistance.

Soon after our arrival, having pitched camp, and made and drank coffee in camp style, which was—each man boil for himself in a quart tin cup, and

cool by pouring into, and drinking from a pint cup of the same metal; several of us, without thinking it necessary to obtain leave, paid a visit to the little town of Falmouth for the purpose of finding a sutler's shop, and laying in some tobacco and other articles. Being entirely ignorant of the fact that passes were required in order to safely leave camp, several of us stood upon the street, and allowed ourselves to be captured by a Provost marshal's guard, who marched us, together with a number of other soldiers from various regiments, some two miles upon the wrong side of Falmouth, delivering us over to the tender mercy of General Patrick, Provost Marshal General of the Army of the Potomac, at his headquarters. Here after waiting until nearly dark, we had patiently to listen to a lecture from the general, and after being admonished to do so no more, and pleading ignorance of the fact that passes were required, and stating that our own officers allowed us to leave camp, were instructed to "give wide publicity" to the statement of the general that no one was allowed under any circumstances to leave the encampment of his command without the neces-

sary document. We were then released to find our way home, some four miles, in the dark, through a strange country, hilly and broken with ravines. But worse than the tramp was our chagrin as old soldiers at having been green enough to allow ourselves to be captured by a Provost guard, which certainly would not have occurred, had we been aware that they were making such arrests. The interview with General Patrick made an impression upon my mind which is indelible. I can still in my mind's eye see the kind-hearted, gray-haired old man, wave his hands and repeat, "give it wide publicity, boys, wide publicity."

Our first picket duty on this line, was upon the river bank, about one-half mile in front of our camp, and about two miles above Falmouth. The river at this point was full of rocks and fordable, with banks low, immediately at the edge of the river, but rising into quite a high hill a short way back. The pickets were stationed upon the hills overlooking the river, and in spite of orders to the contrary, we used to frequently pass our pickets, descend to the water's edge and signal to the rebels opposite, who, if I

recollect rightly, belonged to the Fourth Georgia and Eighth Alabama regiments. Upon seeing our signals, they would at once prepare for business by loading themselves with cloth haversacks of tobacco, and holding them above their heads, plunge into the icy cold water, and make their way across to our side, sometimes passing from rock to rock, and sometimes up to their breasts in water. Two generally came over at a time, and as soon as they arrived barter would commence, and in a few minutes the tobacco would be exchanged for overcoats, shoes, blankets, coffee and sugar, or any of the numerous articles plentiful with us, but scarce with them, when they would at once return, both parties being satisfied with their bargains. Tobacco, in our camp, was at that time worth (sutler's price) \$2.50 per pound, and they would give for an overcoat, which was charged to us at \$7.50, ten pounds of navy plug tobacco, or \$25 in value. They informed us they could draw such portion of their pay as they wished, in tobacco at \$1.00 per pound, and the articles received by them in trade were of great value on their side of the river. The writer once, in bitter cold

weather, traded off his overcoat, not knowing at that time when another could be procured, as quartermaster's stores were, for want of transportation, scarce; but tobacco and money with which to purchase from a sutler were still scarcer. On arriving in camp I had the good fortune to find among a number of comrades who had been absent from the regiment since the battle of Antietam, and just arrived from hospitals, one who had two overcoats and no tobacco; another trade was soon made, and three pounds of rebel tobacco exchanged for a better overcoat than I had sold for ten pounds. This was a piece of good fortune which did not always happen, for many a man famished for tobacco, traded away a blanket, or overcoat, which he could not replace for weeks. I once asked one of these rebel traders if they wore the overcoats which they were always anxious to purchase. He replied, "No, indeed, they were too fine for them to wear;" that they sold readily in Richmond to civilians for \$100 each. Papers were also exchanged, we being always pleased to get Richmond papers, and they equally anxious to buy New York papers, Harper's Weekly having a partic-

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

THE JOURNAL OF THE
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

ular value in their eyes. This traffic was in violation of orders on our side, but was allowed on the other; I presume from the fact that while they traded away nothing but tobacco, they purchased articles of food and clothing which it was an object to them to acquire by any means. In spite of orders to the contrary, it was kept up all winter at different points on the river. There was also a boat which was sent backwards and forwards across the river, coming north laden with one plug of tobacco and two or three papers, which was about its capacity; these articles would be removed, and replaced by New York papers, sugar and coffee, its sails and rudder set, and pushed off into the river on its return trip. We were ordered to retain it and report to the officer of the guard, but I think this order was never obeyed, for I heard of the boat as still plying between the two picket lines until spring.

From this picket duty on the river, we were removed to a line from the river, crossing the Warren-ton road, upon the extreme right wing of the army, and but about one-quarter of a mile from our regimental camp. The favorite post was in the entrance

of a tomb in a family burying-ground. The front of this tomb had been torn down previous to our arrival and the contents piled back, leaving room for three men to sit or lie down in the front portion, well sheltered from the weather, and with a good view across the fields in front. From here, in a short time we were removed to the Lacy House, opposite Fredericksburg, some four miles from our camp. The details for this duty were made for three days at a time, and came about three times a month, so that during the remainder of the winter we had to spend three consecutive days out of every ten in this delightful spot. There were but three posts to stand at this point, and they along the bank of the river, so that during the three days' tour of duty, no one stood guard for more than one relief, and some not at all. This was, unlike most picket duty, not desirable, as our reserve was stationed in a ravine near the Lacy house, without warm food, or even fire to make coffee—so indispensable to a soldier, entirely without shelter, and for the greater portion of the time with clothing wet through, and frozen stiff, unable during the whole time to lie down or

sleep. The weather for the entire winter was terribly severe, raining and freezing most of the time. The rebel guards opposite were stationed in houses along the river bank, and as by mutual agreement there was no picket firing, they simply sat in the windows without arms, and looked out upon the river. Once during the winter, some picket firing occurred above us, which was followed by our posts being drawn back from their exposed position by the river, and a flag of truce boat crossing. What caused the firing we never learned, but it was soon stopped, and our posts re-established. When the firing commenced and before our posts were changed, the "rebs" opposite called across, "Say, Yanks, there are some fools shooting across the river up above, but we won't shoot if you don't." They were assured that we would not, unless fired upon first. Picket firing as a general thing is not only unpleasant, but foolish, as it increases the hardships on both sides, causes wounds and loss of life, and effects nothing for either side. Early in the war when hostiles were stationed within sight of each other, picket firing was almost sure

to result; but later, as the soldiers on either side became more experienced, unless some movement was actually under way, they generally came to a mutual understanding not to fire, and this agreement was generally fulfilled, until the truce was broken by some green or timid soldier, and then both sides were always glad to have it stopped. Owing to lack of warm food and the hardships undergone through want of sleep and severe weather, the termination of our three days' duty generally found us in such a condition, that when relieved in the morning, there would be no attempt to march back to camp in order, but ranks were broken and, every man for himself, all straggled, as best they could, towards home, where we had comfortable log houses with canvas roofs, good bunks, and large mud fire-places; some frequently not reaching camp until night, and completely worn out. Though but about four miles off, the route lay over a broken, hilly country, through half frozen Virginia mud (than which none is worse), up and down deep ravines, and across creeks, which in our exhausted condition made it seem of interminable length.

When camp was at last reached, we would throw ourselves into our bunks and sleep for hours, even hunger being for the time a secondary consideration. Why we had to do picket duty so far from our camp, while other regiments came as far to perform the same duty within one-quarter of a mile from our tents, I presume General Couch could tell, but I certainly never was able to find any one else who could. During part of November and the first portion of December, details were daily made of fatigue parties from each regiment of our brigade (except the Tenth New York, who having a handsome Zouave uniform, were detailed as guard at General Couch's head-quarters,) to report at head-quarters for the purpose of throwing up sand works opposite Fredericksburg. This was the only duty of a soldier ever shirked by the writer, and this duty he had vowed he would never perform. Arriving at the place where work was going on and answering to a roll-call, he would generally secure a pick, and after gently sticking it into the soil once or twice, would make himself scarce, and hunt camp. As many members of the regiment wounded in action had not

yet returned to duty, many on the sick list daily excused from duty, and some excused for being without shoes, men to fill the details were scarce, and these details coming sometimes three or four times a day, put the orderly sergeants to much trouble to fill them; so that they would generally order out the first men they could find in camp, and take no excuse. The writer distinctly remembers that in one day he was three times detailed for this work, and when he plead that he had already been detailed once or twice that day, the sergeant replied it made no difference, and threatened if he would not go to report him for running away. Thus he answered for three men, and did not build a sand battery after all. But fortunately for the artillery men, who were to occupy the works thrown up for them by the infantry, there were soldiers more familiar with the pick and shovel, and by the tenth of December, sand works with their embrasures nicely lined with green cow hides were completed, and the different batteries in position. At daylight, on the morning of December 11th, these batteries opened upon the rebel works in the rear of Freder-

icksburg. Striking camp, we marched to a point opposite the city and near where the Fifteenth regiment, New York Engineers, were trying to lay a pontoon bridge. This movement was opposed by sharpshooters, and a skirmish line stationed in the houses, and rifle pits along the river bank. In the afternoon after our artillery had thoroughly shelled these houses, a force of volunteers was sent across in pontoon boats, and after some loss succeeded in driving the skirmishers from the river front, and the engineers, assisted by details from several infantry regiments, completed the laying of the bridge. At daybreak on the morning of December 12th, the second corps crossed the bridge into the city, our batteries shelling over our heads and the enemy not replying a shot. We found the city entirely deserted by both the inhabitants and soldiers, and in fact, we, the rank and file of the army, supposed that Lee was in retreat, and had abandoned the line of the Rappahannock. Our mistake we were to discover later. Stacking arms in the street, the men dispersed about the town, and while the town was virtually, for a part of the day at least, given up to

be sacked, tobacco seemed to be the only article the men cared to take. Dwelling houses were occupied by the troops, flour confiscated for slap-jacks, and pianos and furniture used ; but, at least as far as my observation went, I can say, that while some damage was necessarily done to these houses and contents, I saw no willful destruction of any property. On a corner near where my regiment spent the day and night, was a bank with the vault closed and locked, and no attempt at all was made to open it, although some of the boys wondered as to its contents. Soon after arriving in the city, the writer found temporary quarters in a fine mansion near the outskirts of the city. A solid shot had passed entirely through this house, in its course passing not over two feet above a bed ; and that bed and room showed evident signs of a hasty getting up and out. Settling down in an easy chair in a fine library, with a copy of Byron to read, war and rumors of war were soon forgotten, when suddenly a rifle shot was heard, quickly succeeded by another nearer by ; looking from the window, on the corner within a few yards of the front of the house, was seen a soldier in grey loading his

piece ; further reading was hastily postponed, the back yard gained, fences jumped, until the centre of the block was reached ; then the street successfully crossed, through the yard opposite into the next street, where soldiers in blue were found. This was the first intimation received that I did not as yet own a house and library in Fredericksburg, and that Lee was not as far on his way to Richmond as we had hoped. Later in the day the rebels fired from their batteries on the hills, which had been so long silent, at our troops which were still crossing the river ; and we then began to suspect there was other business before us, than simply following in the track of a retreating army. As our wagons had not crossed the river with rations, I was one of a detail made to cross to the opposite side, draw rations for our company, and return with them. Our only difficulty in going was to press our way through the troops moving in the opposite direction from which we were going ; but on our return, the rebel batteries had got pretty good range of the bridge, and shell falling near made it quite exciting, a number of the men crossing being hit ; but our

detail escaping with the loss only of several boxes of hard tack, for which the contents of the flour barrels in the houses occupied by us had to suffer, and the men did not complain, as slap-jacks, for a change, were considered superior to hard-tack. In the parlor of the house occupied by Company E was a piano, and as several of the boys could "play *at*" that instrument, we had quite an impromptu concert and stag dance.

On the morning of the 13th, we were awakened from the unusual luxury of sleep upon a carpeted floor, by our batteries across the river opening fire upon the enemy's works. Artillery dashed up the streets, which ran through the city from the river to the open country beyond, and attempted to get into position. Then the rebels opened in earnest and the streets, from the hills in the rear to the river in front, were swept and raked by the fire of artillery, which in a few minutes made it impossible for our guns to maintain positions. Although the houses were not shelled, they were frequently hit, and fragments of brick, as well as of shell, were hurled through the air, wounding and killing horses

and men, and together with the noise making a perfect pandemonium. Perhaps the most trying position in which a soldier can be placed is standing still under an artillery fire which he cannot return, and must calmly see the effects of, without the exhilaration and excitement of action. This we had to undergo through all the long morning, until about noon, when the order to advance was given, and although this advance meant to face the whole fury of a hotter fire, it was at least action, and was felt as a relief. As we crossed the streets running through the town, which were swept by the artillery fire of the enemy, a laugh was created in our company by George Monroe, one of our tallest men, and as brave a one as ever stepped to the music of war, hesitating, making a pause to pull up the collar of his overcoat, and with head down, running across as though through a shower of rain, instead of a hurricane of iron; and until laughed at, perfectly unconscious of the absurdity of his action. Passing by the flank through the railroad station commanded, as we afterwards read, by sixty pieces of artillery, we filed out into a field where, under the

most terrific artillery fire we had ever faced, we formed line of battle. During this passage of the railroad station, where, even to veteran soldiers, it appeared as though nothing could live, there was but one shell that fairly struck into our regiment; this shell passed through a man in Company D, cutting him completely in two, exploded in the midst of that company, killing and wounding eleven men. Our line was now formed at the foot of Marye's hill, which was crowned by earth-works, rifle-pits, and a stone wall, defended by both infantry and artillery, and completely commanded in the rear by an elevated plateau, red with the flashes of guns. Now the order came to advance, and up the hill moved French's division to one of the most desperate charges of the whole four years of war. Ranks torn by shot and shell; men falling from terrible grape and canister wounds; the very air lurid, and alive with the flashes of guns, and rent with the long shriek of solid shot and shell, and the wicked whistle of grape; with compressed lips and shortened breath, closing up shoulder to shoulder, at length we gained the brow; then while within a few yards of the rifle-

pits and stone wall, up rose rank after rank of infantry, adding to the avalanche of artillery fire a perfect rain of the less noisy, but more destructive rifle ball. Here, almost blown off our feet, staggering as though against a mighty wind, the line for a few minutes held its ground; then, (but not until orders to that effect had been given, more by the motions of the officers than by their voices), slowly and sullenly it gave way, and retiring a few paces below the brow of the hill, there lay down, panting for breath, and clinging to the ground so desperately attained. The division, (as later reports showed), had lost nearly one-half its numbers inside of fifteen or twenty minutes.

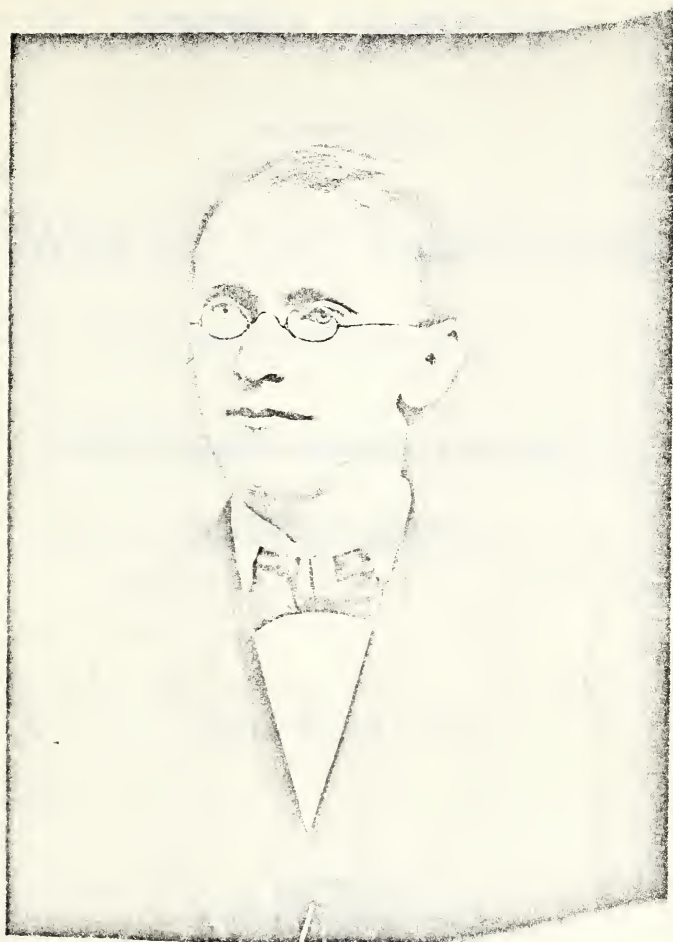
After a slight lull in the roar of battle, the ball again opened, and looking back, we saw the advance of Hancock's division, over the same ground that we had passed. The same tragedy re-occurred, and this splendid division, or what was left of it, lay immediately in our rear. Again was the charge repeated by another division, which we afterwards learned was Humphrey's, of the Fifth corps, but the result was the same. French's division had done all that

men could do, an army could not have successfully assaulted the position, defended as it was; and the hurling of division after division against these impregnable heights was a sacrifice. After dark we were quietly withdrawn, one line at a time, our regiment carrying all of their wounded off with them, leaving none but the dead. I would here state that during two years of service, the Fourth New York lost not a single man by capture and not one by death from disease. Returning to a street facing the river, we stacked arms, and there remained until the night of the 15th of December, when we cautiously withdrew, recrossed the river, and before morning were back in our old camp. Why Lee did not shell the city, into which so many of our troops were crowded, after the fight of the 13th, I have never seen explained; and what the result would have been had he done so, can only be conjectured. Writers upon the battles of the war have agreed, I believe, that no troops could have been successful in an assault upon Marye's hill, and that all that any could have done, was done. As a charge, it was undoubtedly equalled only, if equalled at all during

the war of the rebellion, by that of the rebels at Gettysburg; and there they had the advantage of forming their lines of battle under cover, and were inspired by the thought that the forces that they were about to charge were the raw militia of Pennsylvania, while at Fredericksburg, our troops had to pass through the railroad station by the flank, entirely uncovered, and under a terrible fire, and form line of battle, in open field, in plain view of the enemy, and within point-blank range of his numerous guns; a movement of itself which can only be performed by disciplined and veteran troops.

In conversing with rebels across the river before the movement began, they told us that if we came over, we would find a Long-street, a large Field, two Hills, and a Stone-wall. This punning upon the names of some of their generals, pithily describes the character of the battle-ground. It was generally remarked during the war, that a battle was followed by rain. Shortly after the battle of Fredericksburg came the rain, and the smoke which had been carried off by a north-west wind, was returned by a south-east one, and in the heavy atmosphere, hung over

our camps for several days. Another phenomenon was also noticed : for several days subsequent to the battle, our camps were full of birds, flying hither and thither, as in fright, and either stunned by the noise, or bewildered by the sulphurous fumes of powder, with which the air was filled, they allowed themselves to be easily captured. Of course the foregoing gives but a faint idea of a great battle ; for a private soldier or line officer sees nothing for what occurs in his immediate vicinity, and can, of his own knowledge, tell but little of the most important movements and actions in which he took part. The writer has looked up no authority, examined no account of the battle, with a view to assist in his narrative, but has attempted only to give from recollection and a very meagre diary, an account of what came within his own limited sphere of observation.



Geo. B. Peck Jr.
Late Lt. 2nd Re. S.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,
BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THIRD SERIES—No. 5.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
1884.

PROVIDENCE PRESS COMPANY, PRINTERS.

CAMP AND HOSPITAL.

BY

GEORGE B. PECK, JR.,

[Late Second Lieutenant, Second Rhode Island Volunteers.]

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY
1884.

[Edition limited to two hundred and fifty copies.]

CAMP AND HOSPITAL.

In accordance with special orders from the war department, I was mustered December 14, 1864, as a Second Lieutenant in Company G, Second Regiment, Rhode Island Volunteers, upon condition that I should enlist a sufficient number of men to fill its ranks. I realized at once the importance of my new dignity, for the very next act was to "swear in" a recruit. This man, under the wing of an "agent," had been dogging the footsteps of the national officials ever since the preceding afternoon. Then it had been discovered that because of the new arrangements there was none qualified to enlist him. The agent manifested great concern, and in reply to a remark made by Major Henry C. Jenckes, of the old Second, a few moments previously, "We will fix all that in five minutes," said, "I wish you would; the fellow is rather restless, and may jump me. I had

to spend a lot of money and work hard to keep him over night!" The recruiting agent evidently had an eye to the "head money."

I at once secured a desk room in the front of a hat store at 10 Market Square, and snugly ensconced in a capacious arm chair, patiently awaited visitors. The store was occupied by Alexander M. Massie, youngest brother of James W. Massie, D. D., LL. D., of London, who came to this country in 1863, on a mission of sympathy and love from the "Union and Emancipation Society," of Manchester. My duties consisted simply in administering the oath to eager aspirants for glory brought in by zealous runners, and signing enlistment papers; also in giving orders on the State Quartermaster-General to the runners for their premium in securing the recruit. Trade was not brisk. During the month I received but fifteen callers, five of whom were subsequently rejected by the mustering officer, and a sixth jumped when he found his "chum" was ordered to remain at home.

On Monday, January 2, 1865, new orders were received from Washington by Colonel Neidé, the

State Superintendent of recruiting service. In accordance therewith the camp near Mashapaug pond, which had been the first military home of companies organized to refill the Second Rhode Island, was broken up the succeeding day, and the fourteen men then in camp were transferred to the barracks on the back side of the cove, the depot for recruits for all other organizations. It was located on the right bank of the Woonasquatucket, opposite the building formerly used as the State Prison. I was placed on waiting orders, with directions to report each morning for instructions. These came on the 13th, and were to the effect that on the following day I must report for duty at the United States Draft Rendezvous (more widely known as the Conscript Camp) at Grapevine Point, then within the limits of Fairhaven, but now a part of New Haven, Ct.

On the 14th I took the midday train for New Haven, having in charge two musicians and a box of dishes. The latter contained 104 tin plates, 73 tin cups, 44 knives, 28 forks, and 30 spoons of various sizes. It is worthy of mention that those of my command who had preceded me had contrived to get

along with 62 plates, 32 cups, and 5 knives. Naturally, therefore, they were much rejoiced to receive a more ample supply of certain articles generally considered indispensable. Concerning the men, I was told to keep my eye upon them, and see that by no possibility they should slip through my fingers. A quiet hint was dropped that the revolver is an excellent persuasive when other arguments fail. They were volunteers, however, in the strict sense of the term, and thoughts of "leaping the bounty" never entered their heads.

Upon reaching camp I reported to the officer in charge, Captain Edward I. Merrill, of the Third Regiment, Veteran Reserve Corps, an elderly gentleman, originally from Maine. He informed me the headquarters of the Post were in the city, but that they were closed for the day and would not be open until Monday. I then visited the barrack assigned Company G, distributed required dishes, and made such other arrangements as were possible for the comfort of the men. Tarrying subsequently for a few moments in the officer of the day's private office, a soldier apparently eighteen years of age was brought

in, charged with having drawn a knife on the patrol. He protested his innocence, and strict search failed to reveal any weapon, yet he was placed in the guard-house for safe keeping, in accordance with an axiomatic principle of that institution,—a soldier is supposed to be a rascal until he is proved to be honest.

Sunday afternoon I visited camp, appointed three lance corporals, and detailed one of them, with five privates, to guard the barrack door, with orders to permit no one to enter unless he came from Rhode Island; if any member of the Company had business with others he might transact it outside. A half hour later, while conversing with the provost marshal, Captain James Rice, of the First Vermont Heavy Artillery, a rifle shot was heard close at hand. The Captain sprang for his repeater, which always stood fully loaded in the corner, and then rushed out to ascertain the cause of the alarm. The guard, thoroughly equipped, were instantly at their post by the gate. Every one was on the *qui vive*. It was soon discovered that no revolt was imminent, but simply a "break" had occurred of three men for lib-

erty and an extra bounty. Still the "assembly" called the general recruits together; they were marched to their quarters, and though it was yet very early, were locked up for the night. Meanwhile Captain Rice, with another officer and two soldiers, jumped into a hack standing just outside the gate, and ordered the driver to start, at full speed, in a given direction in pursuit of the fugitives. Fortunately the driver misunderstood his orders, and drove very differently from the course he was told to follow. Two of the men had selected a path before untried, and soon the party found themselves alongside the culprits, who were making their best speed over the fields. The driver was now ordered to stop, but he found it impossible to rein in the galloping horses as promptly as was desired, so Captain Rice knocked out the window and blazed away. The horses were frightened, but no one was hurt. Soon, however, the team was stopped. All jumped to the ground and ran with eager haste. One of the deserters was speedily overtaken, and when ordered to surrender, halted and permitted himself to be placed quietly in custody of the officer. The other

strained every nerve to escape, but with no avail. One of the soldiers had nearly overtaken him, and was calling upon him to halt, when he suddenly stopped, wheeled around, and gave his pursuer a blow between the eyes, sending him reeling backward. But the second soldier was close behind. He did not relish the treatment of his associate, so he drew his bayonet from his belt and tapping the fellow gently over the head with the shank, felled him to the earth. Captain Rice and the other soldier now came up, and, with their assistance, the temporarily disabled bounty-jumper was placed in the carriage, and driven back to camp in charge of the two officers. The two deserters were handcuffed as soon as captured. The third man had turned directly toward New Haven, purposing to cross Mill river on the ice. He reached the bank, but while gazing in blank astonishment at the unexpected sight of open water before him, a dropsical soldier of the Invalid Corps, as the organization was popularly termed, came up and said, "You'll catch cold standing there; you'd better go back with me!" Without a word of remonstrance the fellow turned, and the twain pro-

ceeded quietly to camp conversing on indifferent themes:

The determined resistance to recapture offered by the second fugitive was deemed positive proof that he had a considerable sum of money secreted upon his person. Accordingly he was twice searched with unusual rigor under the supervision of the officer of the day, the provost marshal and the assistant provost, but without result. They were about to consign him, though reluctantly, to the guard-house, when Captain Ketchum, who chanced to be occupied elsewhere, sent word that he would like to examine him after they had finished. Now this Ketchum was a Brooklyn boy, consequently acquainted with the ways of the metropolis, and what he did not know of certain departments of practical science, is scarcely worth the knowing. As soon as he was disengaged, he hastened to the guard-room and commenced a thorough inspection *de novo*. Nothing was discovered from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet. Every garment had been searched but the boots. He examined one all over, inside and out, by sight and by touch, yet nothing was revealed.

Next he tapped on the sole with his knuckles, and then on the heel. "Ah! that is hollow!" he exclaimed, and seizing a bayonet instantly pried it off, and a fine roll of greenbacks tumbled upon the floor. "Now don't spoil the other boot," he continued, "let's see if we can't discover the secret lid." This was found after a few minutes' careful investigation, and a second roll of bills obtained, amounting to \$1,100, with a small package containing a diamond pin and a gold ring. These were deposited to the man's credit with the paymaster of the post, and he was placed in durance vile.

But how could this break occur when the camp was encircled with a tight board fence not less than a dozen feet in height, at whose base paced the ever watchful sentry of the Reserve Corps? At one point a two-story house had been constructed on its line to provide quarters for the permanent officers of the institution. This was divided on each floor transversely, affording some half dozen sections lighted by a window at each end. By the side of that, on the inner extremity, was a door opening upon a narrow platform, which extended the entire front of the

building. These sections were subdivided by a light partition and door, so that the front part served as an office; the rear, looking out upon green fields and pleasant gardens, as a bed-room. The rooms on the second floor were reached by a balcony and stairway at the east end of the building. One of the sections on the lower floor chanced to be unoccupied. The lock was opened either by a bent wire or a skeleton key, and immediately closed by the same means. Passing directly into the rear room they shut the door behind them, and were secure from detection until every arrangement had been completed, when they dashed through the window and made off at full speed. The sentinel at the foot of the stairs hearing the crash rushed up the steps, and, discovering the fugitives, blazed away, thereby sounding the alarm.

On Monday morning, January 16th, I reported to Colonel A. Cady, at his headquarters on the second floor of Brewster Building. I found him to be a fine looking and most courteous gentleman, tall and erect, though hair and moustache were completely silvered; dignified, yet kindly expressioned, a per-



fect model of the old type of soldier. He received me more cordially than his appearance had led me to expect; questioned me at length concerning recruiting interests in Providence, the prospects of my regiment, and various Rhode Islanders whom he had met. Upon retiring he told me to take orders directly from Captain Merrill. Colonel Cady also held authority over a military hospital occupying the building and grounds of the State Hospital, which had been leased for that purpose at a merely nominal rental.

During the two months I remained at the Draft Rendezvous I found a pleasant and comfortable home at the Madison House, State street, New Haven. Captain and Mrs. Rice boarded there, as well as three or four bachelor officers, which made it the more agreeable. I spent two or three hours every forenoon at Grapevine Point; the remainder of my time was devoted to reading and study. Sundays I went out in the afternoon. On the 22d, while sitting in the Provost Marshal's office, two men came in, one of whom informed the clerk that the other had some business to attend to. Now it was

customary to observe the Sabbath within that precinct, but the clerk good-naturedly permitted the second to proceed. He had not uttered a dozen words when a Captain who was also sitting in the room looked up, and, recognizing the person, poured forth such a torrent of invective and abuse, that the fellow was glad to leave the room without continuing his story. He had formerly been in this Captain's regiment, but had deserted and enlisted twice since. While no other officer would have deported thus, the provocation was commensurate. About the middle of the afternoon a rifle shot was heard, but no special stir accompanied it. After a few minutes some started across the enclosure in direction of the sound, others of the veterans passed out of the gate on the chase, while Captain Rice seized his seventeen-shooter, and another officer took his. Jumping into a sleigh, the two, with a driver, started off at a gallop, but soon discovered there was no stampede, and ere long all were back at camp bitterly regretting it was a false alarm, as they were just in the humor for a hunt.

Upon reaching camp Tuesday morning, 24th, I



was informed that the denizens of the guard-house had tunnelled out during the night, and all who cared to go, twenty-six in number, had left for parts unknown. Some, possessed of greater prudence or timidity, preferred to remain where best acquainted. The officers seemed greatly surprised at this feat, but I had always wondered how any sane man could have ordered a guard-house to be placed within six feet of the fence. The idea of a subterranean tunnel had entered my mind at sight, but deeming it unbecoming a raw recruit to counsel veterans, I said nothing. The scapegraces had been engaged on it for weeks, removing the flooring and bringing the excavated earth out in their pockets when set to policing the camp. A sheet-iron floor prevented a repetition of the performance. Six of the men were recaptured that very morning, one of whom was a member of my company. He had endeavored previously to desert from Mashapaug. When we finally left camp for the transport, bound to City Point, a sergeant with loaded rifle and fixed bayonet marched on either side of him with instructions to shoot him should he move an inch from his place.

Yet in front of Petersburg he proved himself a most excellent soldier, and was one of the eleven men of Company G who accompanied Captain Gleason and myself in the charge at Sailors' Creek. The rest of the seventy present and fit for duty after the capture of Petersburg, who were not detailed as guards at various points, had dropped by the roadside one after another, utterly exhausted from the severity of the march. This man simply desired the double bounty so many had secured.

As I was taking my accustomed Sunday afternoon promenade to camp on the 29th, I met Captain Ketchum with five hundred recruits under guard, on their way to the transport which would take them to the seat of war. This was the toughest set of fellows that ever graduated from that school. The following facts which came to the knowledge of the officers, though of course not witnessed by them, will sufficiently establish the hardness of their character.

The general recruits, substitutes and conscripts, were quartered in the second and third stories of a large building previously used as a factory. They

were assigned to temporary companies, which were divided equally between the respective floors. They were marched out about 10 o'clock each morning for the purpose of thoroughly ventilating and policing the barracks, and marched in about three o'clock in the afternoon, when they were locked up for the night. Of course in unpleasant weather, and I believe at other times, at almost any hour they desired, the men were permitted to return to their quarters, but all were obliged to appear in line to answer to their names at those instants. Now it was quite the custom for the substitutes, who generally were proficient in every department of iniquity, to "go through" every new man who looked at all neat and tidy. And this was done not only when he was taking his first sleep, but even before—while yet he considered himself wide awake. While some engaged his attention, others would appropriate such portions of his outfit as they desired, and it was absolutely impossible for any one to discover the culprit or find the stolen goods.

One night it seemed as though they had resolved to outdo themselves. Sometime past midnight they

"raided" a raw recruit, stripped him of every particle of clothing, and then thrust him down the water closet. The poor fellow fortunately escaped serious accidents in his descent, and upon reaching the vault had sufficient presence of mind to search for and find the boards which covered the outer portion of the pit. Pushing them aside he was gradually emerging to fresh air, when a sentinel discovered him and fired. The man begged for mercy, which the guard promptly granted, upon discovering the state of the case. The victim was well cared for, but no part of his outfit could ever be found.

None will be surprised to learn that the doors from these apartments to the hallways consisted of the strongest grating, and were secured with heavy locks and bolts; also that outside, by day and by night, stood from four to six veterans with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets. When the officer of the day made his grand rounds at night, or visited the place by day, a soldier always followed him, ready to use his rifle at a half second's notice, and the officer's revolver was conveniently placed just before entering. For nearly a month before this squad was sent

off, two men followed their superior. His life would not have been worth insuring had he entered alone, and even despite all precautions, attempts thereon were by no means infrequent.

The extreme recklessness of these men is still more apparent from the fact that before the transport had passed Sandy Hook, it had been fired three times. Their intention, evidently, was to necessitate the beaching of the vessel, thereby enabling them to swim ashore, skedaddle to another State, reenlist, and secure still another bounty. But Captain Ketchum was the right man for the emergency. He informed them that when he heard the next alarm he should order the hatches battened down, and would leave them to extinguish the flames they had kindled. They knew he meant what he said, and consequently he was not troubled farther. There were scarcely sufficient boats for the crew and the guard.

The *morale* of the recruits (and that word is here used in a broad sense to include all enlisted men bound to the front) varied according to their class. Conscripts seldom occasioned trouble or attempted desertion. A man who intended to avoid all military

duty would previously have provided a substitute or placed himself north of the Canada line. Generally they were men who had been deterred by family or business considerations from volunteering, and yet were not insensible to the personal claims of the government in its hour of danger. While they could not anticipate the call of duty, they would not evade it. Substitutes were for the most part foreigners, with no sympathy for the cause or the country. When bounty-jumping had been proved a comparatively safe profession, many from New York and other large cities engaged therein, while some crossed the ocean to participate in this the easiest and most remunerative of all exciting occupations. Had the rigors of martial law been less frequently remitted, and flagrant derelictions of duty, whether by plain blouse or double-starred shoulder-straps, been invariably followed by peremptory mandates to kneel on one's coffin, humanity and the national treasury would alike have gained inestimably. But some of the substitutes engaged near the close of the war had previously performed their whole duty to their country by serving a full three years' enlistment,

and others were of that better class of foreigners who generally volunteered. To such, of course, the above remarks are inapplicable. The volunteers included men of every shade of sentiment intervening between, and even encroaching upon, the classes already alluded to; also vast numbers of youth as yet scarcely attained to man's estate. With few exceptions they faithfully fulfilled the obligations assumed.

One fact should not be overlooked when comparing the volunteer of '64 with that of '61. Those who responded to the earlier calls for troops rushed forth with an eager outburst of enthusiasm, positive that every rebel would be exterminated in less than a year, ignorant of the perils and hardships of war, mindful chiefly of the storied beauties of the sunny south, of their escape from frigid storms, and of the victor's laurels awaiting them. Those who donned the blue in later days deliberately girded themselves, perfectly realizing the consequences. They had seen the sick and the maimed, had heard of Andersonville and Salisbury and Libby, and had read of the swamps of the Chickahominy, the sand-hills of Mor-

ris Island, and the bayous of the Mississippi. They were sensible that, though ignorant and inexperienced, they must encounter tried veterans from scores of battle-fields. The increased bounties were neutralized by the depreciations of the greenback; they rarely prompted an enlistment, though sometimes determining the place. Besides, of what weight was money compared with life? And places of honor would be anticipated by older soldiers! None displayed more self-denying patriotism than men who entered the ranks of our vast armies during the last two years of the war.

When the last of Captain Ketchum's command had been safely secured below deck on the transport, I went out to camp and found twenty-five of my men on guard. I esteemed this quite a compliment; for hitherto only members of the Veteran Corps, and of Hancock's Corps, (an organization of veterans projected but never effected,) had been entrusted with such responsibility. From that time until our departure, the same confidence was reposed in Rhode Island men, and to such an extent that, on February 11, all the available men of Company G, forty-two

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is argued that a knowledge of the history of the language is essential for a full understanding of the language in its present state. The second part of the paper deals with the question of the origin of the English language. It is shown that the English language is a mixture of many different languages, and that its history is a complex one. The third part of the paper discusses the question of the development of the English language. It is shown that the English language has developed in a very rapid and irregular manner, and that its future development is uncertain. The fourth part of the paper deals with the question of the influence of the English language on other languages. It is shown that the English language has had a very great influence on many other languages, and that this influence is still increasing. The fifth part of the paper discusses the question of the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is argued that a knowledge of the history of the language is essential for a full understanding of the language in its present state.

in number, with six members of Company H that had arrived the day previous, were detailed for duty. In no instance was the Commander's trust betrayed.

During the forenoon of February 6th, Peter Haley, fifer, borrowed a comrade's pipe for a smoke. That was nothing remarkable. He returned it duly filled. That was very proper. But when the owner proceeded to take his smoke he suddenly discovered the bowl contained sulphur, saltpetre, and charcoal, as well as tobacco. Natural consequences ensued, but the fifer continued his amusement with five hours of equestrian performances and a night in the guard-house.

On Sunday, February 12th, I had the pleasure of officiating for the second time as officer of the day. Routine business was scarcely completed when I observed a very woebegone chap standing near me in the guard-room. "What is wanted?" "I want to go out!" "Can't help it—don't let anybody out." "But I've got my discharge," said he, beginning to cry. "That makes no difference, you can't go out." Then came real boo-hooing with lots of crocodile tears, necessitating a vigorous use of the coat-sleeve.

Sergeant Green, of the Seventh Rhode Island, officer of the guard, now spoke up. "Don't you know any better than that? What do you mean by addressing your superior officer in that way? Take off your hat; assume the position of a soldier and state your business in a proper manner!" The man straightened up, bared his head, and in broken accents continued, "I came in with a friend who was one of that squad that got here yesterday, and he wanted me to stay all night and the officer let me, but I want to go out now!" and another torrent of tears gushed forth. Sergeant Green now demanded his discharge, which was promptly produced, and submitted to my inspection. It was correct for January 25, and issued, if I remember correctly, by an Ohio Colonel. "Can't help that; you've had time enough to enlist half a dozen times since then." And still he sobbed as the briney rivers flowed anew. Then Sergeant Green commenced: "Is your name James E. White?" "Yes!" "You lie!" thundered the sergeant. "And you are five feet nine inches high?" "Yes!" "That's another lie! And your hair is black, and your eyes dark brown,

etc.? (the unfortunate fellow continued, nodding assent). This is all nonsense!" Then I told our victim to step outside the door for a moment. After a short deliberation I sent him in charge of Sergeant Green to Captain Merrill, who referred them to Captain French, special supervisor of general recruits. He was speedily proved to be a Connecticut substitute, who had, it is true, served one enlistment, but now desired money instead of glory. He was at once provided with comfortable quarters in the guard-house, to meditate upon the fate of "the best laid plans of mice and men." The preliminary search revealed \$60 in greenbacks, a receipt for \$480, a pocket knife, and two diaries. The discharge paper was unquestionably his own.

Early next morning, before I was relieved, one of my men was brought to me under the following circumstances. For some time he had complained of feeling very ill, but the post surgeon would never excuse him from duty. Sunday morning he attended on sick-call as usual, when the doctor, exchanging glances with the sergeant, ordered him taken to the hospital. The poor fellow had not been in bed ten

minutes before he rose, jumped out the window, and was back at his quarters. Terrible illness, that! Monday morning he was detailed for camp guard, but he positively refused either to attend sick-call or go on duty. Hence he was brought to me and his story told by the sergeant. It was my first knowledge of the case. I told him he must visit the surgeon, or go on guard, or take the consequences. He positively refused to do either. Considering his bump of perversity unduly developed, I promptly ordered him to be placed on the "horse" until he should be willing to do the one or the other, I cared not which. When the command was given he commenced explanations, but he was informed I had nothing more to say. I discussed the matter with Lieutenant Howard of the Fourteenth New Hampshire, who relieved me, and the result was I left directions that he should be kept exercising from nine to twelve and two to five each day, until he preferred other occupation. The day was extremely severe. The "horse's" back was higher than the top of the fence, so the poor unfortunate had the full benefit of a piercing northwest wind, rushing down the valley

of Mill river, with fearful impetuosity. No stirrups were provided; the comforts of his situation may be imagined. Subsequently I ascertained that twenty minutes after I left camp, Captain Merrill chanced to see him and ordered him taken down. The next morning he attended sick-call and was excused from duty.

An important feature of the camp was its band. This was composed of musically inclined recruits, who were detained as long as possible on their way to the front, that this important adjunct of military life might always present a creditable appearance. On Friday evening, February 17th, as I sat writing in my room at the Madison House, strains of martial music suddenly burst upon my ear. It was a serenade complimentary to Captain Rice, our Provost Marshal, who was justly very popular. The pen was instantly dropped, and another listener added to the group on the balcony. At the conclusion of a varied programme finely rendered, Captain Rice invited the band to the dining hall, where, with the assistance of Captain French and myself, they disposed of an oys-

ter supper, elaborately, though hastily prepared, for the serenade was a perfect surprise.

One week later, about two P. M., the band gave a concert at the camp. The general recruits were marshalled near the band-stand as a battalion of eight companies, of about fifty men each, in column of divisions closed in mass. Knapsacks were then unslung and placed upon the ground, affording excellent seats for the men. The other soldiers consulted their own tastes regarding the performance. The officers occupied a balcony facing the battalion. Only two ladies were present on this occasion, though in warmer weather their attendance was large. The programme required more than an hour for its rendition, which was in a style worthy of high commendation, especially if the brief periods of membership are considered.

On Monday morning, February 27, a promenade concert was given under the auspices of the officers of the Draft Rendezvous and Knight Military Hospital at Music Hall, New Haven, for the purpose of securing funds to establish a Soldiers' Rest. It was the most brilliant affair of its kind that had ever

taken place in that city. The hall was superbly decorated with flags and flowers. The ensigns of foreign nations were generously provided by the celebrated showman, P. T. Barnum, and, hanging in festoons around the sides of the hall, attracted special attention. On the front of the galleries were portraits of President Lincoln, Governors Buckingham and Trumbull, and the prominent generals of the day. On either side of the stage was a brass howitzer, with stacks of arms, piles of grape shot, and groups of sabre bayonets picturesquely arranged, while over them hung nineteen battle-flags of Connecticut regiments, each one bearing unmistakable proof of the gallantry with which they had been borne over many fields of carnage. At the rear of the stage and beneath an arch of brilliant gas jets equalling in number the States of the Union, was a large figure of the Goddess of Liberty, draped with the Stars and Stripes, and holding the American flag. The bower was surmounted by a large and richly gilded eagle. Music was furnished by one of the famous bands of the country, that of the Third Regiment U. S. Artillery, numbering thirty pieces, then stationed at

Fort Trumbull. The assemblage was composed of the wealth, beauty and fashion of New Haven, with honorable delegations from New York, New London, Bridgeport and Hartford. Conspicuous on the floor was Lieutenant George W. Darling, of the First Rhode Island Cavalry, also of the Draft Rendezvous. He was accompanied by the most graceful and elegantly attired of Fairhaven's daughters—a lady who favored him with her society many subsequent years. The concert lasted from eight to eleven, and was followed after an hour's intermission for supper, by a hop, which continued until 4 A. M. It was a success financially, as well as socially. More than five thousand dollars were realized from the evening's entertainment.

Late Sunday evening, March 12th, the propeller "Euterpe" reached Long Wharf, New Haven, and next morning Company G bade the Conscript Camp a long farewell. By ten o'clock a column was formed on the parade in the following order: Post Band; Company G, under command of Lieutenant Carr, in heavy marching orders, four ranks, double file, with three days' rations, but without arms or cartridge

boxes ; three hundred and odd general recruits, also in four ranks, but flanked on either side by a file of men from the Veteran Reserve Corps, with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets, ready to suppress in the most summary manner any attempt to break. When all things were ready the order was given, the gates thrown open wide, and in step with soul inspiring strains of martial music we marched forth to—glory ! New Haven streets were too familiar with the spectacle to devote special attention, and the pier was reached without incident. As we filed upon the steamer's deck, the question naturally arose, which of us go to victory and which to death. Then I realized my individual responsibility as I had not before. Captain Sanford, of the Twenty-second New York, and Lieutenant Darling, with about forty men, accompanied us in charge of the general recruits.

The trip to Fortress Munroe was uneventful. I kept my state-room from the time we were well outside Sandy Hook, finding more comfort in the seclusion of my quiet berth than in the boisterous hilarities of stag quadrilles on deck. Concerning precau-

tions taken against guerillas on the James river; the peculiarities of Grant's military railway; the moral, social, and physical aspects of life before Petersburg; some charms of camp guard and picket duty; distant glimpses of the battles of Forts Steadman and Fisher, Virginia, and the assault of Petersburg; Lincoln's triumphal entry into the beleagured fortress; the pursuit of a fleeing army; the battle of Sailor's Creek, and how it seems to get shot; a night in a field hospital, and the bliss of an eight hours' ambulance ride over corduroy roads, when stretched at full length on back or side,—the curious reader may learn if he will by referring to the experiences of "A Recruit before Petersburg," No. 8, Second Series, of these publications. Happy was I when at the close of this ride my ambulance drew up in front of a tent door. Gently was I drawn forth by my feet upon a litter and thence quickly deposited beneath the canvas upon a pine board covered with two army blankets. I have slept upon softer beds, but upon none more welcome. Quiet rest was the heart's desire then—the conditions were immaterial. A supper of hard tack and coffee was speedily

disposed of, a ration of milk punch put out of sight, (they told me it would be good for me,) and forthwith I was in the embrace of Morpheus.

Next morning, Saturday, April 8th, I had a fair chance to inspect my quarters. The tent had evidently seen service. It was blackened from exposure to the elements, and tiny ventilators were abundant. As no heavy rainstorm visited us, this latter peculiarity was not altogether disagreeable. I breakfasted on hard tack and coffee, but dined and supped on hard tack and soup, the principal ingredient of which was apparently corn meal. Yet it was toothsome! In the evening the Sanitary Commission delegate again distributed his ration of punch. This time natural consequences ensued, and I slept very little. Thereupon I was indignant and swore off. I felt that medical officers should be wiser than to permit such an indiscriminate administration of stimulants. My breakfast on the ninth was as that of the preceding day, but the noon-tide soup really contained a bit of beef, with a few pieces of soft bread and some hard tack. It was delicious! Our supper consisted of a pint cupful of rather soft mush, over

which was poured a liberal allowance of warm water, moderately colored, and sweetened with brown sugar. The authorities were very considerate that day. They sent a detail to the woods for pine twigs. These were scattered over the boards with the assurance they would make a nice soft bed. The practical result was this — that whereas previously the only tender parts of my body were the bony protuberances, now every single twig was inflicting a vigorous punch, as it had opportunity. Moral : if you have a nice board to sleep on, be content ! This evening the Sanitary chap distributed more punch than usual. A certain tent was occupied by a number of officers, including a colonel. They were making the best of their situation, telling stories, and cracking jokes, *ad infinitum*. Accordingly when he made his rounds they seemed so happy he supposed they had been served. This third evening, however, they decided to keep still until a later hour. They felt they were paying too dearly for their fun.

Monday, April 10th, found our commissariat exhausted, hence no breakfast was provided until nearly ten o'clock, and then in limited quantities ;

mush and sorghum—"only that and nothing more!" Later in the forenoon we heard that Lee had surrendered. No special demonstration was elicited. At noon our soup contained a plenty of beef, potato and maccaroni—conclusive evidence that our supply trains had arrived. At night we were regaled with our old familiar tack and coffee.

Around camp were sundry "Johnnies" that had been gobbled up at divers places, and one of these, my attendant, private Lincoln, proceeded to interview. He was about twenty-five years of age, clad in butternut, tall, lank and green. He was with General Lee when he withdrew from Richmond. "How many men did he have with him?" "Oh, I dunno, a right smart heap." "But how many were there? Can't you give me some idea?" "Oh, a big lot of we uns; as many as three thousand!" The calibre of that man's brain was at once manifest, also the advantage of banishing district school-masters.

Tuesday morning we were again served with our familiar hard tack and coffee. At noon another allowance was issued, accompanied with soup, but no beef. About two o'clock I was placed with eight

or ten others in a box car, the floor of which was covered with clean straw some six inches in depth, affording the most comfortable bed I had seen in a month. Stretching myself directly opposite the open door, that I might enjoy the trip as much as possible, I suddenly heard loud cheering rapidly approaching. I glanced up on the low bank, and whom should I discover but General Grant, with Meade, Barnard, and others, with escort, returning from Appomattox. Every wounded man cheered enthusiastically, the General graciously, but gravely, acknowledging their salute. He took the first train to City Point, starting about three. We left on the second, about four. During the delay a Sanitary man came round distributing apples among the disabled. They were the familiar brown russets. Not one was perfectly sound. Most were half or two-thirds gone. The decayed portion had been roughly scraped away with one swoop of the knife, and the sound fragments thrown into the basket. He took half a dozen pieces, and though we stopped not to pare or cleanse more perfectly, no fruit was ever half so luscious. In fact that was the only time I ever

relished an apple. About dark, soft crackers and stimulants were passed through the train; I confined my attention to the former, being wise through — experience.

The early dawn of April 12th found us at Petersburg, and 7 o'clock at City Point. After a long delay I was borne on a litter to the Depot Field Hospital, and placed upon a bed in Ward D, of the Second Stockade of the Second Division of the Sixth Corps Hospital. At first it seemed more nice than wise to assign distinct sections of the hospital to special organizations, but a conversation I overheard on my trip from Burksville demonstrated the foresight of the construction engineer. The colonel, already alluded to, was asked by a captain what he thought of the Ninth Corps. "Oh, they're not of much account! Burnside is the only one that ever could get any fighting out of them." "Well, but they have done some pretty good work under Parke," continued the captain. "Yes," rejoined the colonel, "but that was due to early training. Everybody knows that if it had not been for Burnside the corps never would have amounted to anything." I thought

if any member of that corps had been on the car, there might have been an interesting scene.

The building in which I was placed was a stockade with frame windows and board roof, covered with tarred felting. A broad aisle extended through the centre from end to end, on each side of which were some twenty beds. These were placed upon neat and substantial, though plain frames, the legs of which were stakes driven into the hard beaten clay, that formed a flooring as durable as cement. The ticks were filled with fresh straw, and the pillows with feathers. The sheets were nice and clean. Only those who have not seen one for a month can imagine the luxury of that couch.

As soon as I was settled in bed, breakfast was served—stewed oysters and soft crackers. Then reading matter was distributed. A woman brought around some apples and oranges, but they were no temptation to me.

All days are alike in a hospital. The only way I could keep note of time was by the variations in our bill of fare. Thus Thursday, 13th, was distinguished by the pine-apple served at dinner; the 14th, by

shad for dinner, steak for breakfast, and canned peaches at each of the three meals; and the 15th by striped bass for dinner, and ham and eggs for breakfast. On Sunday, 16th, I was transferred to Ward C. The other was occupied by enlisted men, and there were but one or two officers, who were removed as soon as vacancies occurred in those wards assigned to shoulder-straps. As the nurse came to my bed on his regular bi-daily tour of wound dressing, I observed he poured some liquid from a bottle into the basin of water he was to use in syringing my side. "Hallo! what's that you're putting in?" "Chlorinated soda," was the answer. "What is that for?" "To cleanse the wound; bad stuff is commencing to form there, and if I don't use this now you'll have to have it touched up with lunar caustic by-and-by." "Well, don't it hurt?" "No, nothing of any account." "But it hurt him considerably," said I, bending my head in the direction of the next bed. "Oh, he makes a fuss about nothing." "Well, go ahead!" said I, desperately, as I firmly set my teeth, expecting to be half murdered. The sensation was no more intense than when, two or three days later,



ice water was used for the same purpose. When the dressing had been completed, the nurse asked if it had hurt? "Nothing like what I expected," was the reply.

"Didn't I tell you he was a coward, and makes a great fuss about nothing?" I made very little reply, but thought a bullet wound just in front the instep, necessitating a considerable cut on the under side of the foot for drainage, might be much more painful and sensitive than mine. And yet for the two weeks subsequent a heavy stream of water from a half-pint vulcanized rubber syringe was readily thrown through my side, entering at one bullet hole, and emerging at the other. During all this time it was impossible for me to turn from back to side, and the reverse, without assistance; some one was obliged to lift my left foot to the opposite side of the right, and back again.

News was received during the morning of President Lincoln's assassination. About 11 o'clock the ward-master brought in a paper and read some brief particulars. I distinctly remember raising myself upon my elbow and listening attentively to the conclusion

•

of the account, then falling back exhausted upon my pillow with the reflection, "It's all for the best, else the Supreme would not have permitted it to happen. It's best for him; I have faith to believe it will be best for the country." To-day my opinion is unchanged. His name is unsullied, and though subsequent events are not what we would have desired, the same Hand that guided us to victory will yet lead to unification.

In a neighboring ward an exciting scene occurred. Upon one bed lay a wounded "Johnny." Incautiously he exclaimed, "I am glad of it; he won't free any more niggers!" Instantly every wounded man that could crawl started for the fellow, and would have torn him to pieces had not the ward-master summoned the guard and removed him under escort. That night at supper I had canned tomato and roast apple.

On April 17th, guns were fired half-hourly in memory of the late President. News of Jeff. Davis' Danville proclamation was received, creating much amusement. On the morning of the 18th, I had a severe headache. When I discovered that morphine

entered into the composition of the Dovers' Powders taken on the two preceding evenings, I ascribed it to that, and resolved to have nothing more to do with such stuff. I was suffering from a severe cold consequent upon my partial submersion at Sailor's Creek. It first manifested itself in a harassing cough dependant upon elongation of the uvula, or palate, as it is sometimes improperly denominated. I asked the surgeon for medicine to relieve the condition. He told me there was none, but he would give me a powder to take at night that would relieve me. I pitied the man whose professional resources were so limited, and thought if that was the case the old school might take a few lessons from the new with benefit. (Drs. Ringer, Phillips and Bartholow have since obtained great glory by so doing.) I tried the powders, but speedily fell back upon my pocket case of little sugar pills.

The benumbing influence of wounds demands a moment's attention. The injured man seems entirely absorbed by his physical necessities; he appears almost incapable of higher thoughts or emotions. When for an instant some circumstance of towering

importance or unheard of singularity forces itself upon his attention, realization is but half accomplished—it is as though it were not—and immediately the recollection thereof is well nigh obliterated. The practical bearing of this fact upon the question of preparation for the great hereafter is obvious.

One morning, perhaps it was that on which the news of Johnston's surrender was received, I remarked, "Well, my fighting days are over for one while I guess!" Captain Walter B. Smith, of the Thirty-seventh Massachusetts, who lay on the bed opposite, spoke up, "you mustn't feel so, Peck. There are a plenty of men who have been wounded a great deal worse than you; that are all right now." "Pooh!" was the rejoinder, "I am not in the least discouraged, only before any of us will be able to move around much the war will be over." "That's so," said he, "but I have no cause for complaint. A man must expect to be hit once in a while. I have fired over two hundred shots at the 'Johnnies,' and I *know* I reached my mark more than three-quarters of the time. This is the fourth time I have been wounded, and I don't know as that is more than my

share under the circumstances." "You have the advantage of me," I replied. "I came out on general principles; for the sake of my country; now I have a private account. And I haven't hurt a flea to my knowledge since I have been out here!" "That does make a difference," he rejoined, "but you may consider your injury as part payment for what I have inflicted. However, you've shown your good will, and that is all any of us have done."

The bed next mine was occupied by Adjutant John S. Bradley, also of the Thirty-seventh Massachusetts, a graduate of Union College, and a very agreeable fellow. He was twice wounded at Sailor's Creek, once by a small pistol shot, that struck on or near his shoulder-blade, and presumably glanced out, for it could not be found, neither was there indication of its burrowing. A rifle ball, also, passed through both thighs, leaving, of course, four marks upon his person. His overcoat was burned both on the back and side. Exactly how and when the former was inflicted, I never knew, but the latter was received under the following circumstances. Affairs had become decidedly mixed. Hand to hand encounters

were frequent. A confederate who had pushed boldly forward to repel the Yankee attack naturally determined to quiet the prominent leader near him and delivered his fire with the effect just indicated. A private soldier caught him in the act and presented him with one of the charges in the chamber of his seven-shooter, thereby immediately terminating his sublunary existence. The Yankee now travelled on in search of farther adventure, and speedily found it, for another "Johnny" chanced to walk in the same direction.

Mr. Massachusetts took no particular notice of the fellow's presence (for he wore a blue overcoat) until suddenly he felt a bayonet run through his breast, and saw Mr. Southron dropping the rifle with which the wound had been inflicted, seize his own Spencer and endeavor to wrest it from his grasp. But alas! for the "Johnny!" He had miscalculated the chances of war. Southern impetuosity was no match for northern pertinacity. The bayonet was drawn out of the wound partly by the weight of the pendant rifle, and partly by the twistings of the combatants. Once freed the Yank gave an almost super-human wrench,

breaking away his erring brother's ruthless grasp of his pet, (for the Thirty-seventh boys loved their repeaters better than their sweethearts), and the next instant brought the butt down fairly and squarely on the cranium of the poor unfortunate who sank to rise no more. I saw the Massachusetts man some two weeks after in the hospital at City Point. He had called in to see his Adjutant,—sufficient evidence his wound was doing well.

On Saturday morning, April 22d, leaves of absence came for all wounded officers who desired to spend the period of their convalescence at home. Most took the boat next morning, (perhaps that they might reach New York in time to witness Lincoln's funeral cortege), but I remained until Monday morning. I was recompensed for my good conduct by having an entire state-room to myself on my passage to Washington, though very many sound officers, who had secured brief leaves now that the war was virtually ended, were obliged to spend the night on the floor. We settled our board bills before leaving, some of us by paying cash, others by orders on the paymaster. The price was one dollar per

day, an extremely moderate rate when time, place, circumstance and quality of fare are considered. The only criticism that ever entered my mind was concerning the propriety of granting wounded men such a liberal meat diet. I found I could not bear it, and accordingly devoted most of my attention to vegetables and other farinaceous articles of food, especially puddings, which were most excellent. I apprehend many a fever was enkindled by incautious feasting under such conditions.

A summer or two after the war I chanced to meet one afternoon at Rocky Point James McWhinnie, Jr., then a student in Brown University, but more recently a clergyman of considerable note. At the battle of Chancellorsville, while in the discharge of his duty as sergeant of the Twentieth Connecticut Volunteers, he received a severe wound, necessitating the removal of his left leg near the knee. After mutual introduction and a few commonplace remarks, he suddenly asked, "Were you ever sorry that you entered the service?" "Never!" was my prompt reply. "Nor I either," was the quick rejoinder; continuing, "I have always entertained supreme contempt for those

fellows who enlisted, and then, simply because they chanced to be hit, became sick of their bargain." Although I had made up my mind before entering the service to be perfectly satisfied if I escaped with the loss of an arm or a foot, I felt humbled to hear a man who had suffered as much and sacrificed as much as he had, speak in so noble a manner. My own inconveniences were as nothing in comparison. Yet he was a fair representative not only of our native volunteers, but those foreign born who were sufficiently intelligent to appreciate the blessings extended by the land of their adoption. Each was prompted by that spirit of lofty patriotism which nineteen centuries ago found apt embodiment in those familiar words,

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori!"



George N. Bliss,
Late Capt. Co. C, First R. I. Cavalry Vols.

[PICTURE TAKEN AUGUST 1, 1852, (AGE 45,) IN UNIFORM AS MAJOR,

PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,
BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THIRD SERIES—No. 6.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY
1884.

PROVIDENCE PRESS COMPANY, PRINTERS.

CAVALRY SERVICE
WITH GENERAL SHERIDAN,
AND
LIFE IN LIBBY PRISON.

BY
GEORGE N. BLISS.

[Read before the Society, Tuesday, November 18, 1883.]

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY
1884.

[Edition limited to two hundred and fifty copies.]

CAVALRY SERVICE WITH GENERAL SHERIDAN,
AND
LIFE IN LIBBY PRISON.

It was during the month of July, 1864, that the rebel General Early, inspired with the boastful determination of compelling General Grant to relax his death-grip on Petersburg, marched rapidly down the valley of the Shenandoah with a large force of veteran soldiers, crossed the Potomac, routed the small but gallant army of General Wallace at Monocacy, and pushed on till his skirmishers appeared before the fortifications protecting the Capitol on the west. It was a favorable opportunity for the last rebel raid into Maryland. Great was the consternation in Washington. Riders dashed in from Rockville, but twelve miles away, with the startling intelligence that the rebel army was advancing on the city. The

government employees were placed under arms, to the great dismay of the clerks in the quartermaster's and ordnance departments, whose knowledge of the art of war had consisted chiefly in sending exasperating suggestions to officers in the field, asking for full explanations as to the loss of some particular sabre-scabbard, saddle or bridle. Perhaps if Early had succeeded in getting near enough to drop a few shells among them, or their papers, it might have had the effect of simplyfying army book-keeping for a time, to the great relief of certain sorely perplexed officers. But it was necessary that something should be done at once to restore that peace and quietness so essential, not only to successful statesmanship in the halls of Congress, but also for the preparation of conundrums by the hard-worked clerks. All this General Grant quietly and successfully accomplished, and rescued the Capitol, without letting go his hold of Petersburg. Among the troops under command of General Sheridan, sent by steamers from City Point on the James River to Washington, was the First Regiment of Rhode Island Cavalry. We numbered about two hundred sabres, under the command of

Major P. M. Farrington. Sailing upon the second day of August, 1864, we reached our destination upon the following day, and found that the infantry of the sixth corps had pushed Early back towards Harper's Ferry. Marching rapidly through Maryland, we again found ourselves in Virginia, near Harper's Ferry, on the eighth of August. Upon the ninth of August, Major Farrington was ordered to march with the regiment to Middleburg, Va. The real order was to go to Millwood, a few miles distant, but the mistake of a clerk changed it to Middleburg, some forty miles away, calling for a dash through the rebel lines, and a long march through the chosen country of Moseby's guerrillas. About two o'clock in the afternoon the column was in motion, and when the picket line was reached, a sudden dash scattered the enemy, leaving prisoner in our hands, a lieutenant with his horse and arms. This lieutenant was about to be married to a daughter of the citizen in whose house we surprised him. The clergyman was ready to commence the ceremony when we appeared to forbid the bans and take him upon an excursion in no manner resembling a bridal tour. The prisoner

was a brave and manly soldier, and bore his misfortune without complaint; one of his legs had been badly fractured by a bullet at Gettysburg, but the injured bones had united without producing lameness. I cannot recall his name, and do not know whether the close of the war left him among the living, but hope that fate was kind, and she was true, and that he was permitted to return and complete the ceremony so rudely interrupted by the chance of war. We pressed rapidly forward, forded the Shenandoah about sunset, near Snicker's Gap, and crossing the mountains near the Gap, bivouacked late at night near Snickersville. At daylight the next morning we were again on the road. A few of Moseby's men were constantly in sight in front, on the flanks, and in rear of the column; but our march was so rapid and unexpected that they were evidently unable to understand what we were about, to get men enough together to offer us battle, or even to annoy and retard our advance. In fact the few skirmishing shots fired were an advantage to us, as they served to keep the men well closed and prevented straggling. At ten o'clock in the morning

we marched through Middleburg, to the great astonishment of the citizens, who had little reason for expecting such a visit at that time. Our useless task accomplished, it only remained for us to return to our lines. I was in command of the rear guard, and kept with me two blacksmiths, whose duty consisted in resetting shoes upon such horses as happened from time to time to require such attention. When a horse from the main column fell behind for aid from the blacksmith, the rear guard halted until the work was done, and stopped the advance of the enemy who followed closely in our rear. At such times the blacksmiths never stopped, not even to take a friendly chew of tobacco, light a pipe, or tell a story. The work was done with neatness and dispatch. If they have continued to work in the same rapid and energetic manner in these piping days of peace, they must be worth millions by this time. Late at night, we halted near Waterford, so weary that the men not placed on guard, threw themselves upon the ground and slept soundly until daylight, hardly waiting to unbuckle a sabre belt or roll up in a blanket. Early on the morning of

August eleventh, we rode into Harper's Ferry, having travelled one hundred and twelve miles in less than forty-eight hours, without the loss of a horse or a man. It was known that Moseby had a much larger force than ours, in the country through which we passed, and it was thought at headquarters that we could not escape severe loss, and in fact it was reported in our army that we had all been captured; but General McIntosh who knew us well, said: "The First Rhode Island Cavalry has as many lives as a cat; it will be all cut to pieces one day, and be all right and ready for duty, the next." Upon our return to Harper's Ferry, we learned that our army had advanced, and that our brigade was near Winchester. Moving to the front we passed through Charlestown and Berryville, and camped for the night near Opequan Creek, a few miles from Winchester. About sunrise on the morning of the thirteenth of August, a lieutenant of the quartermaster's department, galloped into our camp with the alarm that Moseby's guerrillas had attacked the rear of the supply train at Berryville, some five miles away. At once we were in the saddle and

moving upon Berryville at the gallop; suddenly we were astonished by meeting hundreds of well uniformed and equipped infantry, retreating from Berryville, who called out to us as we rode rapidly past them: "That's right, go in, give them h—l!" Major Farrington rode up to the infantry colonel, ordered him to rally the infantry and return at once to Berryville, with his command; the colonel promptly obeyed without, as it seemed, getting it through his head that he ranked any higher than a cavalry major. We reached Berryville with an ample force of cavalry and infantry, but Moseby had seen from afar the whirling dust of our advance. Hastily gathering the mules from about ninety wagons, and such other plunder as could easily be taken, he escaped across the Shenandoah, probably crossing at Snicker's Gap, the same spot forded by our regiment four days before. Although too late for what we most desired, a brush with Moseby, we were in time to drive him away from the larger part of his plunder; fifty wagons with their contents were left unharmed, forty wagons had been set on fire, but we saved eighteen of them, making a total loss of only twenty-two.

Unfortunately, however, the baggage wagons of the First Rhode Island were among those destroyed and with them went all our company and regimental books and papers, and nearly all the dress parade uniforms of our officers. The salutation, "Did you save any of your good clothes?" was a common one about that time, and one officer became very indignant at the statement made by a comrade, that Captain —— had lost, by this calamity, his entire personal baggage, consisting of "a paper collar and a tooth-pick." While giving orders about saving the wagons, I was surprised at hearing explosions like the report of a pistol, followed by the whistle of bullets, and on examination, I found that the fire had reached a box of copper cartridges, and that I was being shot at by a baggage wagon. It occurred to me, with considerable force, that to be shot by a baggage wagon would be particularly mortifying, and I at once gave the wagon the right of way and looked upon its further proceedings from a respectful distance. We found that two regiments of one hundred days' men from Ohio, were in Berryville, as guard for the wagon train, and that Moseby with

about three hundred men took a position on a hill-side, near the town, and opened fire with a single mountain howitzer, which jackass gun was sufficient to stampede the infantry, and they retreated towards Winchester in disorder, without stopping to fight. There were a few veteran infantry soldiers with the train, *en route* to join their regiments at the front, and they fired a few shots and killed several of the enemy. Only two or three men were killed upon our side, but among them was Jesse W. Angell, of troop B, First Rhode Island Cavalry, who was with the baggage train as Regimental Forage Master. He was a brave man and a favorite in the regiment. After a vigorous search we found a black walnut coffin in the village, and buried him with more honor than usually attends a soldier's funeral in war time. The folly of enlisting men to serve as soldiers for one hundred days, and sending them to the front, with officers, (from the Colonel down to the Corporals), entirely unacquainted with the peculiar proceedings of an enemy that used ball cartridge, was never more signally illustrated than by this little incident. Moseby had probably three hundred

men, and if there had been a veteran regiment of infantry, two hundred strong, in place of these two regiments of raw recruits, Moseby would undoubtedly have had a pressing engagement to go away from there, and would not have stood long upon the order of his going. The routed infantrymen would have been good soldiers if veteran officers had been in command, or if they had been sent as recruits to old regiments, but the policy so often pursued of raising new regiments to furnish places for officers, without previous experience, cost the country much blood and treasure. The true policy was laid down by General McClellan, at the beginning of the war, i. e. "to keep the ranks of veteran regiments full by promptly forwarding recruits to supply the ravages of war," but, I have sometimes thought, political necessities obstructed the adoption of a policy so simple and yet so wise. The freaks of memory are singular; matters of importance fade from the mind while the impression of some occurrence of little moment remains indelibly fixed. As I write, I recall on that day the form of a soldier stretched out upon the field, stark and cold, with his face turned up-

wards. A little hole in the centre of his forehead revealed the cause of death, while his empty pockets, turned inside out, gave certain proof that it would be entirely unnecessary to appoint an administrator upon his estate.

For nearly three years I had never been excused from duty on account of sickness, but a week of rainy weather just after this Berryville affair, during which I had the misfortune to be obliged to wear wet clothing in the daytime, and sleep in damp blankets at night, resulted in a strange attack of illness. On the twenty-first of August, as the regiment was marching to the headquarters of General Torbert, to act as his escort, I was forced to dismount and lie down by the roadside, and see the regiment pass on without me. I was finally picked up, loaded into an ambulance, and jolted something over twenty miles into Maryland that night. I remember that I thought one more mile would have killed me. I was sent to McKim's hospital in Baltimore, and from there to the hospital in the grounds of the Naval Academy at Annapolis; at the latter place I met some officers who had just graduated from

Libby prison; they had with them a specimen of the prison corn bread, and the information they gave led me to firmly resolve that I would never allow myself to be taken prisoner. On the eighth of September, although still weak, I rejoined my regiment then lying near Berryville, Va., and by direction of our surgeon, I was treated regularly with his favorite prescription "as much quinine as you can take upon the point of a pen knife, mixed with a somewhat larger quantity of whisky." At this time, Major Farrington was Provost Marshal of the Cavalry Corps; Captain Rogers was Aid-de-Camp to General Merritt; Captain Thayer was Assistant Inspector of the Reserve Brigade; Captain Bliss commanded the provost guard consisting of troops B and C, and Major Turner commanded the regiment.

About two o'clock in the morning of September 19th, the army of Sheridan was preparing for action. General Grant having, the evening before, given him the order he had so often requested "Go in," and in the gray light of early morning the ringing rifle shots gave notice that the hunt was up. As commanding officer of the provost guard, I could see

very little of the battle, but prisoners constantly arriving from the front were placed under my charge thus giving me an opportunity for some interesting conversation. A rebel captain, who had been taken early in the morning, confidently assured me, "that we were not going to Winchester." It was a gallant battle, where all our troops did well their part, and as the sun was near the western horizon, a crushing charge from the cavalry corps, well supported by infantry and artillery, sent Early's army whirling in confusion through Winchester, with a heavy loss in killed and wounded, leaving twenty-five hundred prisoners, five pieces of artillery and nine battle flags with General Sheridan. The protecting shades of night saved the enemy from still greater loss. As I neared the outskirts of the town, about nine o'clock in the evening, with a column of eight hundred prisoners, captured by our cavalry, I asked my confident captain of the morning if he thought he would reach Winchester that night; he sadly replied, "It looks like it."

On the twenty-first of September we were in front of Fisher's Hill, which was a strong position,

held by Early's army, and it looked decidedly formidable from our point of view. The cavalry was sent to the east up the Luray Valley of the Shenandoah; and next day, September 22d, found a body of the enemy occupying a strong position at Milford; and failing, after half a day's fighting, to force a passage, we fell back without pursuit from the enemy. Upon reaching Sheridan's headquarters, we found that he had been again victorious, and had driven the enemy, with heavy loss, from their chosen position at Fisher's Hill. We were at once ordered to again march up the Luray Valley, in the hope that we might possibly gain Early's rear, and capture a part of his force. September 24th, we again overtook the enemy, who had, unfortunately for them, abandoned their strong position at Milford. General Custer had the advance. A brass band was sent out near the skirmish line, and while they were playing the "Star Spangled Banner," the charge was ordered, and it was an inspiring sight to witness. The enemy left right away, except about seventy captured officers and men, who were delivered over to me. Passing through Luray we forded the Shenan-

doah, rejoined Sheridan at Newmarket, and marching through Harrisonburg, halted at Staunton, September 26th, ninety miles from Winchester. At Staunton, the Confederate government had large manufactories and storehouses of army supplies. Millions of dollars worth of arms, ammunition, clothing, rations, saddles and horse equipage were given to the devouring flames. The provost guard, Captain Bliss in command, took charge of the lunatic asylum, containing some seven hundred inmates, and gave full protection to all the property of this institution. September 27th, the third division of cavalry with General Torbert, marched about twelve miles east of Staunton to Waynesboro, and bivouacked for the night.

About three o'clock in the afternoon of September 28th, I received an order from Major Farrington to ride into Waynesboro, and give orders to the provost guards to prevent soldiers from entering the houses, as the entire cavalry force was about to pass through the town to water their horses in the Shenandoah. It was a perfect day of early autumn. The clear spring waters and pure air of the beautiful

mountain valley had restored me to my usual perfect health. My negro servant, Winson Gaskins, was engaged in frying a chicken, and as I reluctantly turned away from the scene of his promising labors, I assured him that I would soon return. It was five months before I saw Winson again, and my first question was, "What did you do with that chicken;" to which he replied "I thought you was never coming back Massa, so I done eat it myself." I had in my charge about fifty prisoners, taken a day or two before, and as I reached the road leading into the town, I met one of my sergeants with a large quantity of bread, which, under my orders, had been baked in the town for the prisoners. In answer to a question as to what he should do with it, I said, "I will be back in a few minutes and attend to it." I rode into the town, gave my orders, and was about to return, when my attention was attracted by the efforts of a Vermont cavalry regiment to destroy the railroad bridge; the wood-work had been burned, and one span of the iron-work had fallen. A ladder had been reared, and a soldier had started to ascend it for the pur-

pose of making a rope fast to the iron-work of the bridge, so that the men might, by a long and strong pull, bring it tumbling down, when I heard shots in the distance across the river, and looking in that direction saw the enemy about a mile away driving in our pickets; but when the reserve was reached, a charge of our men sent the enemy back again. At first, I thought it was only a trifling picket line skirmish, but soon the reserve was hurled back, and I saw that it was an attack in force. I at once rode to Captain Willis C. Capron, of the First Rhode Island Cavalry, who had command of about a dozen men as provost guard in the little village, and ordered him to form his men in line across the main street, and allow none but wounded men to pass to the rear. This was promptly done, and I was about to return to my squadron, when Captain Capron said to me, "I wish you would take command here, you know I have never been in a fight." At first I refused, but the men looked at me as though they really desired it, and I said to Captain Capron, "very well, take your place in the rear of the line as junior captain," and, drawing my sabre, took my place in

front. Our picket line on the opposite side of the river was fighting stoutly, but the force of the enemy was too strong for them, and the firing was rapidly approaching us, when, having rallied about thirty men, it occurred to me that a charge across the river by us, accompanied by vigorous cheering, might produce the impression upon our men and upon the enemy that re-enforcements had arrived, and so check the advance, and give our main body more time to rally for action. It was accordingly done, and with the effect that I had anticipated. I had nearly reached the front when a major rode up to me and said, "Colonel Lowell wishes you to take your command to the ford of the river and stop all stragglers." The order was promptly obeyed, and I was in time to stop about one hundred and fifty men, most of them belonging to a regular cavalry regiment. There were some lieutenants with them, who under my orders, had just about succeeded in getting their men into line, when a rebel battery commenced dropping shells among them, and away they went, sweeping my small force bodily across the river. In the town I again got some of my men to-

gether, and endeavored to build a barricade across the main street. It was about half done, when I saw that it could not be completed in time to be of service, and we again fell back until we came to the Third New Jersey Cavalry, drawn up in column of squadrons in the western suburb of the town. Looking again towards the enemy, I saw Colonel Charles Russell Lowell, who had been in command of the picket line, riding toward us with his horse on a walk, the last man to fall back before the advance of the enemy. The Confederate bullets were whistling about him, and frequent puffs of dust in the road showed where they struck right and left of the brave soldier. Putting spurs to my horse I rode forward to meet him, and the following conversation ensued:

"Colonel Lowell, I had but a few of the provost guards, and did what I could with them to help you."

"Well, Captain, we must check their advance with a sabre charge. Isn't that the best we can do?"

"I think so, Colonel."

By this time we had come up to the Third New

Jersey Cavalry, known in the army as the "butterflies," on account of their gay uniforms, and Colonel Lowell said to the officer in command "Major, let your first squadron sling their carbines, draw their sabres and charge." The order was given, "forward;" but not a man moved, they were completely disheartened by having seen the other troops driven back. The Captain in command of the squadron said "Corporal Jones are you afraid?" and the corporal made no reply. The men wavered, and Colonel Lowell said, "give a cheer boys, and go at them," and at once, suiting the action to the words, spurred his horse at the gallop towards the enemy, followed by myself, both of us waving our sabres. The squadron at once cheered and followed. After going a short distance, Colonel Lowell drew out to one side to be ready to send other troops to the support of the squadron, and I was left to lead the charge. I was mounted on a large and strong sorrel horse, formerly ridden by Captain Charles C. Gray of one of our Rhode Island Batteries, and was soon a hundred yards in advance of the squadron; upon reaching the partially constructed barricade I

pulled up my horse. Looking back, I saw my men coming on with a splendid squadron front; looking forward, I saw the enemy in column of fours, turning to retreat. The ground was down hill towards the enemy, and I had never seen a better opportunity for a sabre charge, and, as the squadron neared me, I shouted, "Come on, boys, they are running!" and jumping my horse over the low barricade, dashed in among the rebels, only to find myself making the attack single-handed. I had ridden past a dozen of the enemy before I discovered my desperate situation. They were retreating in a loose column of fours, and as I rode in among them there were three files on my left hand and one on my right. I felt that death was certain; and, like a lightning flash, my whole life seemed to pass in review before me, closing with the thought, "and this is the end." There was but one chance; fifty men behind me were shouting, "Kill that d— Yankee!" To turn among them and retrace my steps was impossible; my horse was swift, and I thought if I could keep on until I came to a side street, I might dash into that, and by making a circle again, reach our lines. As I rode I

kept my sabre swinging, striking six blows, right and left. Two of the enemy escaped by quickly dodging their heads, but I succeeded in wounding four of them : Capt. William A. Moss, Hugh S. Hamilton, color-bearer of the Fourth Virginia Cavalry, and two others unknown to me. The first side-street reached was on the left. Keeping my head close to my horse's neck, I then broke through the three files on my left, and reached the side-street in safety, fully twenty yards from the nearest horseman. For a moment I thought I was safe, when suddenly a bullet, doubtless intended for me, struck my gallant steed and he staggered under the shock. With rein and spur I urged him on, but it was in vain ; he fell with a plunge that left me lying upon the ground. Before I could rise two of the enemy reined in their horses by me, and, leaning over in their saddles, struck at me, one with a carbine the other with a sabre. I could parry but one, and with my sabre stopped the crushing blow from the carbine at the same instant that the sabre gave me a cut across the forehead. I at once rose to my feet and said to the soldier who had wounded me, "For God's sake do

not kill a prisoner!" "Surrender, then," he said; to which I replied, "I do surrender." He demanded my sword and pistol which I gave to him, and had scarcely done so when I was struck in the back with such force as to thrust me two steps forward. Upon turning to discover the cause of this assault I found that a soldier had ridden up on the trot, and stabbed me with his sabre, which would have passed entirely through my body but for the fact that in his ignorance of the proper use of the weapon he had failed to make the half-turn of wrist necessary to give the sabre smooth entrance between the ribs. I also saw at this moment another soldier taking aim at me with a revolver. There was only one chance left me: I called for protection as a free mason, and Captain Henry C. Lee, the Acting Adjutant-General of the enemy's force, at once came to my assistance, ordered a soldier to take me to the rear and see that my wounds were dressed. I suppose the soldiers, who were determined to kill me, were friends of the men I had just wounded; but I had no opportunity for obtaining information on that point. A soldier said to me, "Give me that watch," and I surrendered to

him the only gold-cased watch I ever owned. Another gentleman said, "Give me your money," and to him I gave my pocket-book, but there was very little money in it; another said, "Get out of them boots," but just then the soldier who had been ordered to take charge of me, arrived, and said, "No you don't; you can't take anything more from this man now, he is in my charge." With some assistance, being weak from loss of blood, I mounted behind my guard; but before I started for the hospital, I heard a soldier say, "It is too bad that horse was killed, he was worth eight thousand dollars." Of course that valuation was in Confederate money. After riding about three miles, I reached a field-hospital, where my wounds were dressed, and I then gave my guard, at his request, my cavalry boots in exchange for an old pair of canvas-top shoes. While this trade was in progress, another soldier, impatient at the generous treatment of the guard, exclaimed with an oath, "If you want those boots why don't you yank them off his feet?" to which the manly answer came, "I do not do business in that way," and he assured me that I was perfectly free to retain my

boots if I so desired. I rejoiced that it was still in my power to confer a favor upon one, who, though an enemy, had shown himself to be a gentleman. Later in the evening I was put into an ambulance with Captain William A. Moss, (at that time a lieutenant,) and rode several miles to a small house in the mountains. I found Captain Moss to be a brother mason, who did everything possible for my comfort. He had received a bullet-wound from some other soldier in addition to a sabre-cut from me, but happily recovered from his wounds and now lives at Buckingham Court House, Virginia. My lung having been injured by the sabre-thrust, I had difficulty in sleeping, and the surgeons gave me morphine, from the effects of which I was just dropping off to sleep, when I discovered one of the hospital attendants removing my canvas shoes. I remonstrated, but he said I would be "easier with them off," and made off with them. Need I say I never saw them more? He also, despite my objections, removed my uether garment, giving the same cheerful reason, which, as I was lying upon the floor, near the summit of the Blue Ridge mountains, on a frosty night, without a

blanket, did not meet my approval; but I had no veto power and was obliged to submit with as good grace as possible. In the morning my pantaloons were returned to me, but eighty-five cents in silver and the key of my valise had disappeared from the pockets during the night. The reflection that it would be inconvenient for my thrifty friend to steal the valise of which he had so promptly taken the key, comforted me somewhat.

In the forenoon of September 29th, a mounted courier came to the hospital and said he had orders to take me to the headquarters of the general commanding the Confederate force that had attacked us on the preceding day, and that he had a horse for me at the door. I was very weak from loss of blood and told him it would be impossible for me to sit in the saddle, so the messenger returned without me.

Late at night, on the twenty-ninth of September, the wounded were all landed by the cars in Charlottesville, where I was placed in the officers' hospital and passed two pleasant weeks, for a prisoner, thanks to the kindness and courtesy of the officers and attendants, and especially that of the surgeon in

charge, J. S. Davis, M. D., Professor in the University of Virginia. Captain Farr, of a New York regiment, wounded at Waynesborough, by a bullet through the lung, was placed in the same room with me. He had received a bullet, piercing the body from front to rear, at Gettysburg, and his recovery from that terrible wound seemed to make him confident that he should survive this wound also, and at his dictation I wrote a cheerful and manly letter to his sister. But the inflammation of the wounded lung steadily increased, and, at the end of a week, Doctor Davis told me that he could not live; and yet he was very strong. At supper-time of the last day of his life he rose from his bed, sat down at the table and ate a large bowl of bread, milk and roasted apples; an hour afterwards he died while apparently in a quiet sleep. I was allowed to attend his funeral, and passing though the grounds of the University of Virginia, I stood by the grave of this brave soldier, and gathering an oak leaf from a neighboring tree, dropped half of it in his grave and enclosed the other in a letter to his sister as the last token from the loved and lost. Through the thoughtful

kindness of the authorities I was furnished with a faithful attendant at this funeral, who followed me closely with a gun and maintained a satisfactory state of order in the procession. I might easily have escaped from this hospital had I not given my word of honor to Doctor Davis that I would make no effort to do so. For my benefit, also, an armed sentinel was stationed at the head of the stairs, and on one occasion I found him fast asleep about ten o'clock in the evening. I at once awoke him from his slumbers and gave him a good-natured lecture upon the penalty inflicted by martial law upon a soldier found sleeping on his post. He took it kindly, although he seemed to have a rather vague idea that it was hardly proper for a prisoner to urge his guard to renewed vigilance.

A few days after my arrival at Charlottesville a wounded Confederate from the front called to see me and said he was the first man I attacked in the ranks of the Fourth Virginia, at Waynesboro, and who escaped a cut by dodging. He said, "I tried my best to kill you that day, but your horse was too swift for me ; as I followed, your sabre looked like a snake

writhing through the air." He said that in an attack upon the rear guard of our cavalry, near Harrisonburg, he had led a successful charge, forcing back at a run, the rear guard, for some distance, until upon reaching the main body the Union cavalry reversed the order of march and pursued the Confederates so closely that, upon coming to a river where the bridge had been burned, the rebels were forced to leap their horses from the abutment into the stream and cross under a heavy fire from their pursuers. My brave visitor said he feared he might be shot in the back, and so turned about and faced to the rear while his horse was swimming across, and a bullet struck his head, plowing a furrow, as I could plainly see, from his forehead several inches back without breaking the skull. As he wore a private's uniform, I asked him how he came to lead the charge, to which he replied that he had been often chosen by his officers to lead charges, and he seemed somewhat surprised when I told him that, in the Union cavalry, enlisted men would not have been thus allowed to take the place and duty of commissioned officers.

While in this hospital citizens frequently came to

see the live Yankee and asked him many questions about what would be done if the Confederacy was overthrown. Although profoundly ignorant, I did not hesitate to give prompt and full information upon all points, and I well remember the indignation with which two gentlemen received assurances from me that the government of the United States would, at the end of the war, take measures for the care and protection (for a time) of the negroes. Although drawing the bow at a venture, I hit the mark, for I described the Freedman's Bureau which was in active operation the next year. One day I had an interview with a lady, apparently about forty years of age. She wore the garb of mourning, and my impression was that she had lost her husband in the war. She was the most eloquent defender of the Confederacy I ever met, and assuring me that God was upon their side, she recounted with enthusiasm the storms that had wrecked our war-ships and troop-transport upon the ocean, closing with a graphic description of "Burnside stuck in the mud." As she paused for breath I seized the opportunity to say a word, and the unequal contest ended as follows: "Madame, if

God is upon your side you must succeed; if God be for you who can be against you? and if the Confederacy conquers I will admit that you are right and I am wrong; that God was indeed upon your side. Suppose, however, that the United States win in the war, will you admit that you were wrong and I was right, and that God was upon our side?" "No; that I never will!" she answered, with such spirit and determination as to end the discussion. She had the first and last word, and added one more proof of woman's universal supremacy in a war of words.

At the end of a fortnight my wounds were healed and I was sent by rail to Lynchburg, and confined, with about twenty other officers, in a room where the glass in the windows consisted entirely of iron bars. The first night here was very cold. I had no blanket and laid down on the floor, where I slept until awakened by the cold, when I arose and walked around briskly until I was warm again; then another nap followed until I was again chilled through. Thus slowly dragged the night away. The next day I began to look around for a blanket, and had the good

fortune to find that one of my guards was a mason, who, on being informed of my necessity, told me to meet him at a certain spot in the prison yard at ten o'clock that night, which I did, and received an excellent blanket which did me good service through nearly the whole time of my imprisonment. I had a long talk with my friendly enemy, and found that the blanket, so generously given me, had cost, in Confederate money, forty dollars, which was equivalent to two months of his pay as a soldier. He thought that if the good men of the country could have been brought together they might have settled the quarrel without any war. It would give me great pleasure to learn the subsequent history of this true man, but I have forgotten his name and have never seen him since that interview. After another night in Lynchburg, which, thanks to the blanket, I passed in soldierly comfort, we were sent by rail to Richmond. On reaching Burkesville we witnessed the destructive effects of General Wilson's recent cavalry raid. The railroad tracks were torn up so that we had to tramp through the town. As we passed along, a rather rough-looking individual shouted, "Shcot

the d—d Yankees!" I turned upon him and said, "It takes a brave man to kill a prisoner." He was shamed into silence, and our guards seemed pleased by the rebuke. The railroad from Burkesville was in a most wretched condition and we jolted along at the rate of eight to ten miles an hour, reaching Richmond late at night, and were marched through the silent streets of the rebel capital to Libby prison. On arriving there, our names were taken at the office, and we were asked to deposit any greenbacks or other articles of value in our possession, except Confederate money, which was not considered dangerous. For our valuables a receipt was to be given, and we were assured they would be returned to us when the time came for us to go North. None of our party had anything to deposit. I am a little curious to know what did become of the money and other articles taken away from prisoners. Earlier in the war, large amounts were thus accumulated at Libby prison from prisoners, and I have never heard of the first fortunate soldier who had his property returned to him upon his release from captivity.

While waiting for examination near the office, one

of our men found a barrel of hard tack, and rations were at once distributed, to the great disgust of the officials, who discovered the movement only when the barrel was nearly empty. After our names had been duly recorded a ladder was raised from the first floor to a trap-door in the floor of the second story and we were ordered up. At the top of the ladder we stepped into a room absolutely black with darkness, and were saluted with the fierce shout of "fresh fish!" from a hundred throats. I cannot describe the bewildering and overwhelming effect of those horrid shouts out of the darkness; but it was the usual method of welcoming new-comers to this prison. After the tumult had ceased, we were called upon for such information as we could furnish about the war and the general news of the day, many of the prisoners having been long in captivity. Among them I discovered Captain Edward H. Sears, formerly of the Second Rhode Island Infantry, but afterwards taken prisoner while serving as a paymaster in the navy. Captain Sears told me that in the morning he was going North for exchange, and by the light of a wood fire, in an old box stove, I wrote

two letters which he placed in his boot and safely delivered the communications to friends in Rhode Island.

Through neglect, the wound in my body had reopened, and I was placed in the hospital for treatment, where the news came to us of the battle of Cedar Creek. Our first intelligence came through the arrival of about fifteen hundred prisoners, who had been taken during the disasters of the morning attack; but soon we learned from the Richmond newspapers that their boasted victory had been turned into a crushing defeat. To me, the saddest intelligence from the battle-field was the announcement that Colonel Charles Russell Lowell had fallen in the moment of victory. Many a time I had looked forward to the pleasure of meeting him and talking over the scenes of Waynesboro, and now he was gone forever; I should never again look on that manly form; never again would he lead to victory the crested line of gleaming steel. Charles Russell Lowell, Jr., was born in Boston, January 2d, 1835. In 1850, at the age of fifteen, he entered Harvard University, where he at once took the first rank in

his class and graduated with the valedictory honors. Shortly after graduation he was forced, on account of ill health, to spend two years in travel, most of which was passed in Europe upon the shore of the Mediterranean. His military record shows him to have been among the first to offer his sword in defence of his country. Captain, Sixth United States Cavalry, May 14, 1861; Colonel, Second Massachusetts Cavalry, April 15, 1863; Brigadier-General of Volunteers, October 19, 1864; died at Middletown, Virginia, October 20, 1864, of wounds received at Cedar Creek, October 19, 1864.

On the morning of the battle of Cedar Creek, (October 19,) Colonel Lowell, having received orders to make a reconnoissance on the right of our line, set his brigade in motion at half-past four o'clock, and soon struck the enemy in force, thereby saving the right wing of the army from the surprise and disaster that routed our left that morning. Under a sharp fire, Lowell held his position until half-past seven, when he was relieved by infantry, and the whole cavalry corps was sent three miles away, to the left of the field, for the purpose of taking a



position to cover the retreat of the army. Passing along the fast-retiring line of battle, between the infantry front and the skirmish line, they had an excellent view of the field and were frequently under a heavy fire. "We met everywhere flying men and officers. We asked the officers why they went to the rear. 'They had no command.' We asked the men. 'They had no officers.' They moved past me, that splendid cavalry," wrote shortly after a distinguished general. "If they reached the pike, I felt secure. Lowell got by me before I could speak, but I looked after him for a long distance. Exquisitely mounted, the picture of a soldier—erect, confident, defiant,—he moved at the head of the finest brigade of cavalry that at this day scorns the earth it treads." Striking the turnpike just north of Middletown, which was already occupied by the enemy, Lowell at once established his position at the extreme left of the line ; and he maintained it almost unchanged, against great superiority of numbers, till the final advance in which he received his mortal wound. He attended in person to the disposition of his men, riding again and again along the line of

skirmishers, a shining mark for the sharpshooters on the roofs of houses in the village of Middletown. His horse was shot under him early in the day, making fourteen as the number of horses thus killed under him by the enemy. In a charge at one o'clock, he was hit in the side of the right breast by a spent ball, which, without breaking the skin, imbedded itself in the muscle and deprived him of voice and strength. "It is only my *poor* lung," he said faintly to the officers, who urged him to go to the rear. "You would not have me leave the field without having shed blood?" The force of the blow was sufficient to collapse the lung and cause internal hemorrhage, and, in the opinion of the surgeons, would have been fatal even if he had received no other wound. For an hour and a half he lay on the ground under a temporary shelter. And now reinforcements had come; Sheridan had galloped to the front from Winchester, twenty miles away, and never yet was a reinforcement of ten thousand men upon the perilous edge of battle so decisive in turning defeat into victory as this tremendous reinforcement of a single cavalry soldier. The order reached Lowell

for a general advance along the line at three o'clock. "I feel well, *now*," said he, though too weak to mount his horse without assistance; but once in the saddle he sat as firm and erect as ever. The color had come back to his cheeks, but he could not speak above a whisper. He gave his orders through a member of his staff, and his brigade, as usual, was the first ready. Forward pressed the brigade with its brave commander at its head, and just as they were in the thickest of the fire poured upon them from the town, a cry arose, "The Colonel is hit!" He fell from his horse into the arms of his aids, and was carried forward in the track of his rapidly advancing brigade to a house in the village. His spine was severed at the neck, his body was paralyzed, but his head was as clear as ever. He dictated messages of affection, expressed his satisfaction at the glorious victory, and knowing that for him death was certain and near, he gave complete directions about all the details of his command. His commission as brigadier-general reached him as he lay dying; but as the morning light of October 20th streamed full and clear he was mustered out by death. "We all

shed tears," said Custer, "when we knew we had lost him. It is the greatest loss the cavalry corps has ever suffered." "I do not think there was a quality," said Sheridan, "which I could have added to Lowell. He was the perfection of a man and a soldier." In words of truth, glowing with the fire of genius, well might James Russell Lowell sing:

"Wut's words to them whose faith an' truth
On War's red tech-stone rang true metal,
Who ventured life an' love an' youth
For the gret prize o' death in battle?
To him who, deadly hurt, agen
Flashed on afore the charge's thunder,
Tippin' with fire the bolt o' men
That rived the rebel line asunder."

But let us return to Libby prison, through whose gloomy portal over one hundred and twenty-five thousand of our men passed as prisoners during the war. Well might it have been written there, in letters of blood, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." The food given in the hospital was not sufficient to satisfy my hunger, and finding that we were allowed to buy provisions, if we could obtain Confederate money, I made an effort to improve my

finances, and finding that Lieutenant John Latouche, the Confederate adjutant of the prison, was a brother mason, I told him my situation and asked for a loan; he said he was unable to help me directly, but would try to find assistance for me. A few days later, Adjutant Latouche introduced to me William F. White, a private in a Confederate cavalry regiment, who had recently returned as a prisoner of war from Fort Delaware, and who wished to send to a comrade, he left in that prison, the value in greenbacks of two hundred dollars, in Confederate money, which he gave me and received in return a written order, directing my father to send twenty dollars in greenbacks to White's friend at Fort Delaware. This order was not carried out, my father being unable to find any such soldier at Fort Delaware; but at the close of the war, after considerable effort, I found the address of Mr. White and repaid the loan. Before this money was expended, a Confederate officer came to the prison for the purpose of repaying an obligation. This officer, while a prisoner of war at Fort Warren, Boston harbor, had been visited by a Boston merchant, who gave him fifty dollars, with

the request that he would repay it by going to Libby prison, on his return to Richmond, and giving some Massachusetts officer the value of the loan in Confederate money. At this time there was but one Massachusetts officer in the prison, and he was in the hospital with me. He was a German by birth, and had come to this country for the purpose of serving in our army ; but after receiving a commission, the railroad train in which he was *en route* to join his régiment, was captured by Moseby, and he was mustered into Libby instead. Lieutenant Latouche, wishing to favor me, asked this German if he would give his official receipt for five hundred dollars in Confederate money, and divide the amount with Captain Bliss, which he was very glad to do. On receiving this money, I gave some of it to each officer in the hospital who was without funds, and will say here that during my imprisonment I expended about three hundred dollars in Confederate money for food and gave about two hundred and eighty dollars of the same currency to comrades not so fortunate in getting money. One of the prisoners asked me to exchange for paper a two dollar and a half gold-

piece, and I induced the Confederate sentinel at the hospital door to give me seventy-five dollars for it in Confederate money. This transaction was against the law, and if caught, the Confederate would have been imprisoned; but he probably sold the coin for one hundred and fifty dollars in paper. Our quarters in the hospital, which were on the first floor on the south end of the prison, were very comfortable. There was glass in the windows and the room was well warmed by a large stove. The convalescent prisoners employed their time in playing chess, checkers, cribbage and other games of cards, and also in carving ornaments from beef-bones or other work of similar character. From an old broom-handle I carved a rude set of chess-men, which still remain in my possession as a relic of prison life. For Thanksgiving day a sum of money was furnished by our united resources, so that each of the hospital inmates had generous allowance of beef stew and a large piece of apple pie, the most luxurious repast it was my fortune to enjoy in Libby. The German officer, before mentioned, displayed, at the time of his capture, shrewdness worthy of a na-

tive-born Yankee. He saw that Moseby's men were stripping the clothes from the prisoners and giving them ragged garments in exchange, and at once made with his knife numerous cuts in his uniform, and pulling off his boots, cut the tops into strips, from the leg to the toe, so that the plunderers were disgusted with his ragged appearance and left him undisturbed. After reaching Libby, a needle and thread soon repaired the rents in the cloth, while the boots were as serviceable for in-door life as though they had been untouched by the knife.

"Then why should we grovel for riches,
Or any such glittering toys,
A light heart and a thin pair of breeches
Will go through the wars, my brave boys."

My wounds having again healed, I was, on the eighth of December, transferred from the hospital to the regular prison quarters, where I found an old college friend, Captain Henry S. Burrage, of the Thirty-sixth Massachusetts Infantry, who had been unfairly taken prisoner, a few days before, while exchanging newspapers on the picket line. In return for his capture, the Confederate general, Roger A.

Pryor, had been taken prisoner by our men upon the following day, while he was trying to exchange newspapers in a similar manner. The next day, December 9th, Captain Burrage was summoned to the office of the prison and informed that he had been selected as a hostage for a Confederate private soldier then under sentence of death within our lines. Captain Burrage reminded Major N. P. Turner, the commandant of the prison, that General Pryor was already held as a hostage for him, and that his case ought not to be complicated by this new arrangement. Major Turner admitted the force of this suggestion and examined the prison roll to select another Massachusetts officer, but finding Captain Burrage to be the only one from that State, his eye fell upon my name from Rhode Island, as the next best, and I was summoned to the office, where I was informed that I had been selected as a subject for retaliation. That word struck me then as one of the longest, ugliest and meanest words in the English language, and the revolving years have not softened my prejudice against it. I was further informed that beside myself, Lieutenants Markbreit,



Pavey and Towle were hostages for Privates George P. Sims, W. S. Burgess, John Manes and Thomas M. Campbell, who, under General Burnside's famous death order, had been tried by court martial and sentenced to be hung for recruiting men for the rebel army within the Union lines in East Tennessee. I was furnished with writing materials and told to write North and save the necks of these Confederates if I had any desire to preserve my own. I wrote at once to Senators Anthony and Sprague, my father and others. The letters were over a month in reaching their destination, but were efficient, as fully appears by the following:

COMMISSARY-GENERAL OF PRISONERS, }
WASHINGTON, D. C., January 24, 1865. }

HON. WILLIAM SPRAGUE:

SIR:—In reference to the application of Mr. Bliss, recommended to this office to-day, by yourself, I have the honor to state, that the rebel prisoners inquired of by him, have not been in irons since sometime in September last.

Prisoners of this class on both sides, are, by a recent agreement, to be immediately exchanged. The

case of the Union officers, referred to by Mr. Bliss, will be at once communicated to Lieutenant-Colonel Mulford, Agent of Exchange.

Respectfully your obedient servant,

H. W. WESSELLS,

Commissary-General of Prisoners.

SENATE CHAMBER, January 25, 1865.

DEAR SIR:—I see in the *Providence Journal* a note from your son, Captain Bliss. I received a similar note from him last week, and called upon General Hitchcock, who has charge of the exchanges, and represented the case to him. The General said that immediate measures would be taken for the relief of your gallant son and his companions, and for all others in the same situation.

I wrote to your son, bidding him keep up a good heart, and assuring him that his friends here did not forget him. I write this, thinking the knowledge of it may be a relief to your anxiety.

Very truly yours,

H. B. ANTHONY.

JAMES L. BLISS, Esq.

WASHINGTON, January 21, 1865.

MY DEAR CAPTAIN :—I have yours, dated Libby prison, and have showed it to General Hitchcock, who assures me that measures have already been taken for the relief of you and your fellow-prisoners, and all others similarly situated. I hope you will be relieved before this reaches you ; if not, you soon will be, so keep up a good heart and be assured that we do not forget you.

Very truly yours,

H. B. ANTHONY.

These letters would have greatly cheered us could they have reached our prison cell, but no intelligence from the North came to us. The following paper was given to us three days after our selection as hostages :

OFFICE C. S. MILITARY PRISON, }
RICHMOND, Dec. 12, 1864. }

TO CAPTAIN BLISS, LIEUTENANTS PAVEY, TOWLE
AND MARKBREIT :

GENTLEMEN :—This is to inform you that you are held in close confinement in retaliation for the treat-

ment received by privates George P. Sims, W. S. Burgess, John Manes and Thomas M. Campbell. These men are now held in close confinement and in irons, by the order of your government, at Johnson's Island.

Your obedient servant,

N. P. TURNER,

Major Commanding.

P. S.—You can inform your government and friends.

Major Phillips was placed in the same cell with Captains Boice and Bliss, Lieutenants Towle and Huff, making five persons in a room about eight feet wide and twelve feet in length. In this cell were two pails, one for drinking-water and the other for slops. It was heated by a small cast-iron cylinder stove, and there was nothing but the floor to sit upon. On the morning of December 9th, Major Turner had told us all that we were hostages for Confederates sentenced to be hung by the United States, and that if the sentences were carried out we should be hung in retaliation. For the first hour after reach-

ing the cell we sat on the floor with our elbows resting on our knees, and hands supporting our heads, in perfect silence, as we thought over our situation. It was indeed a solemn day for us all, and can never be forgotten by those who were there. I can even now recall its horror. We grew more cheerful with the lapse of time, but there was ever the shadow of a possible death by the hangman. No one seemed to care for any game or amusement of any kind, nor was any such method of passing the time ever suggested. We were supplied with a bible and some other books, but the cell was so dark that we could read only a little, and even that often made the eyes ache. In the door a hole was cut the size of a man's head, so that the sentinel, pacing to and fro in front of the cell, could see what we were doing. Our allowance of food was brought every morning for the day. There was always a kind of thick soup made of black beans called cow peas; each of these peas had a bug or a worm in it, but we ate the whole, as we could not afford to lose any portion of our scanty allowance. The pea soup was carefully measured out by Major Phillips, so as to give each prisoner

an equal share, The Major divided the corn-bread and salt-fish or meat into five piles, made exactly alike in quantity, to the best of his judgment; then one of the prisoners was placed with his back to the food, and the Major, placing his finger on one pile, said, "Who shall have this?" "Captain Bliss," was the answer. "Who shall have this?" "Lieutenant Towle"; and so on until all was disposed of. By this method of distribution all dispute was avoided; but Captain Boice, of New Jersey, made a lively commotion one day by accusing the Major of partiality in measuring the beans; the other three officers sustained the Major, and the Jerseyman was left in a disgraceful minority. Captain Boice told me that he was in command of the squadron of the Third New Jersey Cavalry I led to the charge at Waynesborough; that he wheeled the squadron about and retreated because of a body of the enemy's cavalry on his left flank, and that he shouted to me to come back. Captain Boice was all wrong in this; he should have followed me, and after passing that cavalry force on his left flank, wheeled his squadron about and the flanking cavalry would have found us coming upon

their rear, while by that time Colonel Lowell would have had another squadron moving upon their front.

“But of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, it might have been.”

During the retreat on the night of September 28th, Captain Boice became separated from his regiment and was captured the next day, and thus we met again, in the same cell, as hostages, with a fair prospect of death at the end of a rope, instead of upon the battle-field. For the first time in my life I now fully appreciated the natural repugnance of a soldier to death by hanging. If it was necessary for me to die, while a prisoner, at the hands of the enemy, it seemed to me that I could face death calmly, looking with unbandaged eyes into the muzzles of soldiers' rifles; but I shrank with loathing from the hangman. I often thought of the scenes about the gallows, and firmly resolved that I would not disgrace my regiment or native State if thus called upon to die. I even wondered whether I should be allowed to make a farewell address, and if so, intended to avail myself of the opportunity to assure the rebels that in the future they would again ac-

knowledge the old flag, against which they were then in arms and for which I was to die, as the emblem of our common country. In those gloomy days, I often thought that if good fortune should once more allow me to walk in freedom beneath the old flag, I would never complain under any privations or misfortunes of the future ; but alas ! these thoughts have not been realized, although the memory of this period has lightened the burden of those trials common to human life.

Our light in the cell came from a well window which had no glass, but was barred by iron rods, and had a roof over it to keep out the rain. As the cell was built of thin boards, with wide cracks, and there was also a hole in the floor, our ventilation was a little too good, and a constant fire was needed to maintain a temperature above freezing. We had a small cast-iron cylinder stove, and each morning the negroes employed about the prison threw in through the hole in the door some logs of green pine wood. They had been sawed the right length for the stove, but had not been split, and were so wet from want of seasoning that they would not burn until cut into

small pieces and dried. All we had to cut up this wood was one common table-knife without a handle. Standing a log upon end, and using a brick for a hammer, we drove the knife into the wood near the edge, and then by working with the hands and striking, with the brick, the ends of the knife projecting beyond the wood, split off a splinter some two fingers thick. In this way we cut up all the wood and kept a kind of cob-house in reserve drying about our stove, so that the fuel burning was constantly preparing new wood for the fire. This work was a source of constant occupation for some member of our party, for, as we had but one knife, only one could work at a time, and we kept the cell quite comfortable during the day, but at night the fire of course went out, and sometimes we suffered much from the cold while we were sleeping. Our blankets were scanty and ragged, but we joined them together in making a kind of common bed, and as we laid down, our bodies filled the cell so tightly that if we wished to turn over it was always done by agreement and by word of command, "Ready,—spoon!" at the word "spoon," we went over together. There

were at this time nine persons in the cells ; Lieutenants Pavey and Markbreit, although hostages with Lieutenant Towle and myself, were not with us, but were in another cell a short distance away, in company with an officer, whose name I have forgotten, and a war correspondent of the *New York World*; though I cannot say for what reason the newspaper man was in there. In our cell were Major Phillips, of Tennessee, Captain Boice, of New Jersey, Lieutenant Huff, of West Virginia, Lieutenant Charles F. Towle, of New Hampshire, and myself, and the diversity of opinion seemed to be as great as that of State, for many times there were discussions in which five different positions were earnestly and vigorously maintained. On one occasion the loud talk attracted the attention of the officer of the guard, who, after listening awhile, was heard to say, he "hoped they would rot there." We did not concur in his opinion and he was evidently disgusted with ours. The Richmond newspapers cost us fifty cents a copy, in Confederate money, but we had one every day, even though we needed the money for food, and eagerly searched for news of the war. One day we read the

announcement that General B. F. Butler was to command an expedition against Fort Fisher, and for the first time we were all of the same opinion, "that it would be a failure." Lieutenant Huff, of West Virginia, was a huge fellow, six feet in height and broad like his native mountains. In our narrow quarters he was rather an uncomfortable neighbor, and so awkward that if he attempted to move about he seemed certain to step upon us all before he sat down; but he was a noble fellow, as a little incident fully proved to us. One day a Virginia gentleman, a relative of Lieutenant Huff, came to see him, and the interview was in the cellar, where we could hardly avoid hearing and seeing all that occurred. The visitor, instead of answering Lieutenant Huff's questions about his friends and relatives, seemed determined to insult and abuse him for serving in the Union army. For a time Lieutenant Huff bore these reproaches without reply, but at last his huge frame filled with righteous indignation, and never in my life did I hear more eloquent and patriotic words than those which poured like a mountain torrent upon the astonished visitor, who quickly retreated and



left our comrade to be greeted by our unanimous and heart-felt congratulations for his manly defence. Here, as in the other parts of the prison, the vermin called gray-backs, were numerous, and at least once, and sometimes twice a day we examined every article of our clothing, destroying all we could find, whether in the germ or active life, only to find an equally numerous crop the following day. This labor seemed hopeless, but it did keep the vermin in check, for I afterwards saw a prisoner, who, having been either too feeble or too lazy to fight them off, was covered with sores where they had actually eaten the skin from his body.

In the next cell to us was confined Lieutenant H. H. Murray, Thirteenth New Hampshire Infantry Volunteers, and, as only inch boards separated us, we soon arranged one so that it could be slipped out, and thus passed freely from one cell to the other, keeping a good look-out that when the turnkey or any other officer made his appearance, everything was in due form. After some weeks, Lieutenant Towle and myself sent to Major Turner a request that we be put into the cell with Lieutenant Murray,

so that we might have more room. This request was granted, and the officer of the guard unlocked our cell door, and we passed out into the cellar and then into the next cell to join Lieutenant Murray with due order and decorum; but when the officer had retired we had a quiet laugh as we thought how often we had been in that cell without disturbing bolts and bars. However, we were now in rightful possession and relieved from the necessity of the former vigilance. This cell was a little larger than the one we left, and I could make three steps forward before making an about face, an exercise I took for at least an hour each day. By our newspaper I noticed that the price of provisions was rising, and I proposed to my comrades to invest our scanty store of Confederate money in rations, which was done, much to our satisfaction, as prices nearly doubled shortly after. We paid for Indian-meal, \$1.50 a pound; rice and flour, \$2.00 a pound. We bought nothing else, but noticed that apples and onions were \$1.50 each, and a stick of cord-wood the size of a man's arm was \$2.00, with other articles in proportion. Our guards were members of the For-

eign Legion, and all nations seemed to have contributed. There were Irishmen, Englishmen, Frenchmen and Italians. They seemed to sympathize with us, and some of them said, "We are prisoners as much as you, only we have a little longer chain." We studied the faces of the different sentinels carefully, and when we thought, from the appearance of a man, that he could be trusted, we gave him money to buy food for us, which he would do during his four hours off guard, and then bring it to us on his return to the beat. We were never deceived in our judgment in a single case, always receiving promptly the provisions according to the amount of money entrusted to the guard. It was against orders for the guards to speak to us, but most of them did so, although they kept a sharp look-out for the officer of the guard, knowing they would go to Castle Thunder, if caught. As I sat one day looking out through the hole in the door at the sentinel pacing back and forth, he suddenly approached, and throwing a small package into the cell, said, "There is my dinner," and at once returned to his beat. I had not said a word, but like the poor ragged Irishman I suppose

my face was "begging with a thousand tongues." Although we bought some food in addition to the prison rations, it must not be supposed we had all we wished to eat. We had an old frying pan in which we boiled rice and made queer compounds of flour and corn-meal; but our rations were scanty and we were always hungry. Some bacon was given us, said to have come from Bermuda, which was the vilest stuff I ever tried to eat. I boiled some of it with charcoal, to disinfect it, but after all could not eat it; my comrades finally forced it down, but I think it must have astonished their stomachs! We employed considerable time in planning methods of escape, but did not reduce any of them to practice. Every night the rats would run about and over us, and the only way we could keep any food was by hanging it to nails driven into the beams over the middle of our cell. One night I awoke to find a large rat sitting on my head, just over my ear, and I sat up on end so suddenly as to throw the rat, like a stone from a sling, violently against the wall of the cell. Judging from the squeal that followed, the astonishment of the rat was fully as great as my own.

About this time we wanted some fresh meat, and Lieutenant Murray turned the full force of his intellect to the construction of a figure-four trap, weighted with bricks, which were to fall and crush the unlucky rat that nibbled the bait. The trap was duly made and set, but the game did not come. The trap was set many times, but I do not recollect hearing a rat move on such nights, though at other times, when the Lieutenant did not have his artillery in position, the animals seemed to be all over and around us. We had much fun out of this unsuccessful hunt, and gave Lieutenant Murray much useless information upon the rat-catching question, and yet were greatly disappointed at the failure, as we would gladly have eaten our lively visitors. I have been informed that there are over two hundred patents on mouse-traps. I hope they will prove more successful than our device. In the cell where Lieutenants Pavey and Markbreit were confined, rats were caught, roasted and eaten, and our comrades assured us they tasted like grey squirrels.

One day as I sat looking out through the hole in the cell door, the sentinel said to me, "I am going

to desert next week and go North, and if you wish to send letters to your friends I will take them." I wrote this letter to my old college chum, David V. Gerald :

CELL IN LIBBY PRISON, }
RICHMOND, VA., December 28, 1864. }

DEAR GERALD :—Before you receive this you will probably have learned through letters written to father, that I am held in close confinement as a hostage, and am depending on the efforts of my friends to secure my release. My release depends entirely on the power of the influence brought to bear in the proper quarter. Such has been the history of the past, and if the means are used judiciously and vigorously, my situation is more promising than that of a general prisoner of war ; *i. e.*, I shall be released sooner. There are three of us in this cell ; the sun never shines into, it but on clear days there is one place where we can see to read, yet the light is bad and it makes one's eyes ache to read long at a time ; the floor of the cell is about two feet above the ground, and we have a little stove and wood enough (so far), to keep a good fire and do a little cooking when we are so fortunate as to have anything to cook. Tell father not to try to send me money, it

will never reach me ; but he might perhaps succeed in sending me a box with under-clothing, *i. e.*, socks, shirts and drawers, together with some substantial food, *i. e.*, a ham, sardines and onions ; onions I especially need to prevent scurvy. I cannot give any directions, however, about these matters, he must ascertain what he can do. I am in good health and fat, strange as it may seem ; the rebels have failed to kill me in battle and I don't mean they shall by imprisonment. I often wonder, however, at my escape from death at the time of my capture. I was leading a charge of a squadron of the Third New Jersey Cavalry, and was some forty yards ahead of everything, (I had a very swift horse), when the captain commanding the squadron saw that he was flanked, and was obliged to wheel his men with great celerity and fall back to prevent the destruction of his command ; I did not see the rebels on our flank and did not hear the captain shout for me to come back, (which he says he did, for strange to say he is also confined as a hostage in the next cell, having been taken later in the day), so I charged all alone into a brigade of rebel cavalry, who were at the time running away, having been routed by the moral effect of seeing our men sweeping down upon them at the charge ; by the time I got among the rebels I

became aware of my dangerous situation, but my horse was so much excited that I could not pull him up quickly, and presently found myself so deep among the rebels that it was safer to go forward than back. I expected to die, and resolved to sell my life as dearly as possible, and so made vigorous use of my knowledge of the sabre practice. This was in the main street of Waynesboro, Va., so the rebels were in column of fours and I rode down between their files, and since the rebels had their backs towards me, I went by them like the wind before they knew they had a Yank in the regiment. I wounded a lieutenant, the color-bearer of the Fourth Virginia Cavalry, and two others, total, four; while behind me the rebels were yelling, "Kill that d—d * * * * * !" not an elegant but a very forcible expression. I struck six blows, but two rebels dodged and escaped. At this interesting juncture I thought I saw a chance to escape by a side street, and dashed into it, but at this time one of the bullets that had been whistling about me so merrily, struck my horse, and down he went, and spread me out on the ground. Before I got upon my feet a sabre struck me across the forehead, and I parried about the same time another blow, while a gentleman with a Colt's revolver was trying to get a

good aim at me. I jumped upon my feet and said, "For God's sake do not kill a prisoner!" The reb. said, "Surrender, then!" I replied, "I do surrender," and delivered up my arms. About this time something hit me in the back and pushed me forward a step; looking quickly around, I saw that a reb. had stabbed me with a sabre and another gentleman was bringing his pistol to bear. I called out, "Is there a mason here? I am a mason." Some one said, "Are you a mason?" I replied, "I am"; he said, "I will protect you," and he ordered a man to take me to the rear, which was done after I had been robbed of my watch and money, but this was done before the man who was to take me back got to me. The wound in my back was from a quarte-point, and would have been fatal (probably) if the rebel had turned the wrist, *a la* tactics, but his ignorance saved me, since the sabre jammed between the ribs instead of passing smoothly between them. I suffered no pain at all when I was wounded, but had some difficulty in breathing during the first night, since the point of the sabre had slightly injured the lower part of the left lung. When I had a good opportunity to look into my military condition I found five sabre marks on my person, one on the forehead over the right eye, one on the end of my

nose, one on the body, one (scratch) on the left wrist, one (very slight) on the top of my head. I was very kindly treated in the hospital and found myself on exhibition as "the bravest Yank you ever saw." I began to think myself one of the most remarkable heroes of modern times, but have now so far recovered as to look on the ground occasionally and talk with my fellow-victims as though I was an ordinary mortal. Once a week we are allowed to go out into the cellar and wash our clothes, which would be a very good thing if I had any clothes. Luckily I had a new suit of outer clothing upon me when captured, so that I am well provided for in that respect; but some of the men here are in such a ragged state as would excite even a miser's pity. About twenty feet in front of my cell a torpedo is buried, and a guard marches with loaded gun forward and back, being specially charged not to allow any one to go near the torpedo; I don't believe that torpedo will ever be exploded. The guards are all foreigners who are pressed into service against their will, and would desert to our lines in a body if they had a chance; they are very friendly and do what they can for us, giving us food sometimes from their own scanty rations. One of them is intending to desert and go North this week, and has kindly of-

ferred to take this letter with him. If he gets into a tight place he will destroy it, but if he is fortunate this will reach you. *If you don't get it, let me know and I will write again.*

The military news, garbled as it is by rebel papers, is very cheering to us, and I hope another year will see the old flag waving over this city, and I know that thousands here will rejoice to see it; in fact many have told me so. Please give my respects to Miss ——, and read her such portions of this letter as you may deem proper, omitting the appellation applied to me by my rebel friends. Also, show father this letter. Our rations are by no means sumptuous, but it is possible to sustain life upon them, and when we get something from the guards we live very well for prisoners of war. I have written letters, by flag of truce, to Senator Anthony, Secretary Stanton, Miss ——, father, and the commanding officer First Rhode Island Cavalry. I did not write to you but I sent Ned Sears, Paymaster U. S. N., to see you and tell you the story of my wrongs. Give my respects to your father, mother, uncle and other friends. To make assurance doubly sure, I will repeat to you my military situation: Captain Bliss, Lieutenants Markbreit, Pavey and Towle, are held as hostages for

Privates George P. Sims, W. S. Burgess, John Manes and Thomas M. Campbell, C. S. Army, now confined in irons at Johnson's Island, Ohio, by the United States. When they are released and sent South we shall be sent North. There are ten hostages (all in the entire South) confined here, four in one cell, and three in each of the other two.

This is a tight place, but I have seen a great many narrow places in safety before, and hope we may meet again,

"With freedom's soil beneath our feet,
And freedom's banner streaming o'er us."

Yours truly,

G. N. BLISS.

This letter reached its destination, accompanied by the following from a gallant Rhode Island naval officer :

U. S. STEAMER, COMMANDER READ, }
RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER, VA., March 10, 1865. }

FRIEND GERALD :

DEAR SIR:—I enclose herewith a letter from our mutual friend, Captain Bliss. I received it at the

The first of these is the fact that the
 second of these is the fact that the
 third of these is the fact that the
 fourth of these is the fact that the
 fifth of these is the fact that the
 sixth of these is the fact that the
 seventh of these is the fact that the
 eighth of these is the fact that the
 ninth of these is the fact that the
 tenth of these is the fact that the

THE JOURNAL OF THE

1911

The first of these is the fact that the
 second of these is the fact that the
 third of these is the fact that the
 fourth of these is the fact that the
 fifth of these is the fact that the
 sixth of these is the fact that the
 seventh of these is the fact that the
 eighth of these is the fact that the
 ninth of these is the fact that the
 tenth of these is the fact that the

The first of these is the fact that the
 second of these is the fact that the
 third of these is the fact that the
 fourth of these is the fact that the
 fifth of these is the fact that the
 sixth of these is the fact that the
 seventh of these is the fact that the
 eighth of these is the fact that the
 ninth of these is the fact that the
 tenth of these is the fact that the

hands of a deserter from the rebel army, whom I picked up about one hundred miles up the river, and whom I have sent North. Hoping we may soon have the pleasure of greeting our friend again, I remain,

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

EDWARD HOOKER,

Lieutenant-Commander, U. S. N.

Soon after writing this letter, the hardships of prison life placed me upon the sick list, and the medicine given me by the Confederate surgeon seemed to do no good, and indeed it would have been surprising if the mere taking of drugs could have availed against the constant pressure of our unhealthy life and surroundings. My comrades would talk for hours over detailed descriptions of banquets which they had enjoyed in that Northern land, always called "God's Country" by prisoners, and would go over elaborate bills of fare, filled with dainties, which they proposed to feast upon when again so fortunate as to breathe free air. These ef-

forts of memory or imagination were to me an aggravation of the miseries we endured, but my earnest protests had no effect upon my fellow-prisoners. For myself, I carefully avoided, so far as possible, all thoughts of home, friends and the comforts of civilization, finding in such indulgences a mental excitement that warned me "that way madness lies." At night, one of our number would cut a notch upon the edge of a board and say, "Another day of misery gone." Thus the long, dreary days wore on until January 25, 1865, when we were surprised by orders to leave the cells and return to our former quarters in the second story of the building. No explanation or information whatever was given us for the change, but we guessed, of course, that some arrangement had been made for the exchange of hostages. I was still sick, and remained only one night here before being returned to my old place in the hospital, where I found nearly all the comrades I had left there December 8, 1864. Although sick, I was able to eat all the rations allowed prisoners and four dollars' worth of white bread each day; but flour was nine hundred dollars a barrel and bread

was one dollar a loaf, so that the four loaves together were only about the size of a man's fist. This was the price in paper, but in silver, flour was only six dollars a barrel.

On the morning of February 5, 1865, Ross, the clerk of the prison, brought me a parole roll, which I signed, promising to do no harm to the Confederacy until duly exchanged and passed out of Libby prison into the streets of Richmond. In less than two months from this day, colored troops of the Union army were marching through the city and the Confederacy was without a capital. A few days later, President Lincoln visited the city. He made a brief call at Libby prison, breathed for a moment its tainted air, gazed upon its grated windows, trod the slimy floors, and was deeply moved at the reflection of the horrors thus recalled. Joining the procession of my fellow-hostages and several hundred enlisted men, we marched half a mile down the river bank, and then on board a small steamer, and sailed down the James river. We passed through the vessels of the Confederate navy. They had the appearance of large steam-tugs, furnished with powerful

torpedoes carried upon long projecting poles at the bows. We landed near Dutch Gap, and marched across the neck of land to the steamer "New York," over which the old flag was waving, and a band of music welcomed us with the sweet strains of "Home, sweet home." I wish I could describe the scenes which followed among that happy company of released prisoners; men were dancing, shouting, singing, rolling on the ground, and some were shedding tears for very joy; any one ignorant of the fact that we were released prisoners of war, would surely have thought we were all *drunk*,—and so indeed we were, intoxicated with joy. The excitement was so great that there was hardly any sleep among those happy men for the first forty-eight hours of freedom. There seemed to be a universal desire among them to give some one who had never been a prisoner a full account of life under the Confederate flag, and I noticed many men held as the "Ancient Mariner" held the wedding guest.

On the morning of February 7th, our steamer landed us at Annapolis, Maryland, and I sent to D. V. Gerald, Providence, the following telegram:

"Out of the horrible pit and miry clay. Tell father."

Four months of prison life had broken my health more than the previous three years of hardship and exposure in the army. When exchanged, I was placed on light duty as president of a court martial at Annapolis, Maryland, and May 15, 1865, was mustered out of service and returned to peaceful life in my native State of Rhode Island.

APPENDIX.

There was seldom any personal bitterness between the brave soldiers, who, in the Union and Confederate armies, so often met in battle, and many of our former foes have now warm friends among the Union veterans. Since the war, I have had the pleasure of revisiting, many times, old scenes in Virginia, and meeting soldiers who fought on the other side. Said a civilian recently, as he saw the cordiality between our comrades and their Southern guests, "And these are the men our soldiers were trying to lick a few years ago, and now see how they respect them!" And an old veteran replied, "Hang it, sir, *you'd* respect 'em if you'd *been there* and seen how hard they were to lick!"

The following have the merit of being personal narratives, and are therefore here given in print :

A NARRATIVE of a Part of the Operations of the Confederate Cavalry in the Valley of the Shenandoah, Va., During the Autumn of 1864:

After the disastrous day at Winchester, on the 19th of September, 1864, the cavalry force attached to General Jubal A. Early's command, consisting of one division (Fitz Lee's) composed of Lomax's brigade, commanded by General William H. Payne, and Wickham's brigade, under the command of Colonel Thomas T. Munford, all commanded by General Williams C. Wickham; Fitz Lee having been wounded and disabled at Winchester, fell back to Front Royal, and attempted to guard the fords of the Shenandoah river at that point. They were pursued by a superior force of the enemy, who, masking their real design by a feint upon the front of the river line, occupied by the Confederate cavalry, succeeded in crossing at an unguarded ford, and compelled an abandonment of the position by the Confederates. It will be observed that the army of General Early was at this time retreating on two parallel lines, the infantry down the Shenandoah valley proper, and the cavalry down what is called the Page valley, formed by the Blue Ridge mountains and the Massanuttin mountains, a spur of the Blue Ridge. It was

evidently the object of the Union cavalry, by this flank movement, to get in rear of General Early's main army and thus inclose him between two forces, General Sheridan, with his infantry force and part of his cavalry being in his front. The Confederate cavalry endeavored to prevent this by retreating and obstructing the advance of the Union cavalry force in their front, until General Early could reach a place where this purpose could not be accomplished. General Wickham, in furtherance of this design, fell back slowly with his division down the Page valley, disputing the advance of the enemy, and reached Brown Gap, a pass in the Blue Ridge, in Augusta county, on the 26th day of September. Early, by this time, had reached what was supposed to be a defensible position from a flank and rear attack. While Wickham was encamped at Brown's Gap, information was received by the Confederates that a small Union cavalry force was outlying at or near the village of Waynesboro, in Augusta county, situated on the railroad from Charlottesville to Staunton, and near the mouth of Rockfish Gap. It was believed that this force was unsupported by infantry, and by a swift and bold attack by the Confederates, could be captured or severely crippled. Accordingly, on the morning of the 28th of September,

Wickham's brigade of cavalry, commanded by Colonel Munford, consisting of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Regiments of Virginia cavalry, with a section of horse artillery, moved upon Waynesboro, and at the same time, General John C. Breckenridge's division of infantry was put in motion down the valley pike to strike the road from Waynesboro to Staunton, at some point that would intercept the retreat of the Union cavalry. Colonel Munford, with his cavalry, wound along the base of the Blue Ridge, on the west side, by obscure mountain roads, as noiselessly and swiftly as possible, reaching the Charlottesville and Waynesboro road, about a mile from the village, at four o'clock of the afternoon of the 28th of September. As was hoped, the enemy were completely surprised; many of their horses were unbridled and grazing on a piece of meadowland lying between the highway leading to the village and a small stream, a tributary of the South river, one of the branches of the Shenandoah. Colonel Munford, as soon as he saw the situation, quietly disposed his forces for an attack; the First Regiment, commanded by Colonel Willy Carter, was dismounted as sharpshooters, and formed on either side of the road leading to Waynesboro, and the remaining three regiments advanced quietly upon the

village, mounted. The enemy immediately began to bestir themselves, and in a few minutes their cavalry made its appearance in front of the village, between it and the Confederates. A sharp engagement at once ensued; charges and counter-charges were made by the opposing forces, but the Union cavalry was forced steadily back into and through the village, until the western edge was reached, where the Confederates found some obstructions across the street, doubtless put there to retard their advance. The Fourth Virginia Regiment was at this point in the front, and Captain Morgan Strother, its commander, when he discovered the barricade, ordered some of his men to dismount to remove the obstruction. While this was being done, he suddenly gave the order for the dismounted men to mount, which was immediately obeyed, and just then an incident occurred worthy of mention, as exhibiting a deed of individual heroism rarely witnessed. Just as the men of the Fourth Regiment were well in the saddle, after the order of their commanding officer, a single soldier, coming from the direction of the enemy, with sword in hand, dashed into the Black Horse Troop, which composed one of the squadrons of the Fourth Virginia Cavalry, and on that occasion was the color squadron, sabering

the men right and left, wounding several, and among them Lieutenant William A. Moss, and Corporal Hugh Hamilton, a gallant soldier and the color-bearer. The boldness and suddenness of the attack paralyzed for a moment or two the Confederates, and in that interval this bold assailant succeeded in forcing his way through the Confederate column, and might possibly have escaped, but a shot fired by a Confederate brought his horse down and he fell with it. He was at once surrounded and received a sabre cut in the face while in the act of parrying a blow from a carbine; another Confederate gave him a sabre thrust in the back, and in all probability he would have been slain on the spot but for the timely interference of Captain Henry C. Lee, an aid of Colonel Munford, who, seeing the struggle, rode up and put an end to it. It is said that Captain Lee recognized in the prostrate man a brother mason, through some sign or cry used by the masonic order in times of distress or danger. The hero of this affair, which sounds so like a romance, turned out to be Captain George N. Bliss, of the First Rhode Island Cavalry, at that time commanding the provost guard of General Torbert, who was in command of this force at Waynesboro. He was, of course, captured, and his explanation of his rash

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry, no matter how small, should be recorded to ensure the integrity of the financial data. This includes not only sales and purchases but also expenses and income. The document then moves on to discuss the various methods used to collect and analyze this data, highlighting the importance of consistency and accuracy in the reporting process. It also touches upon the role of technology in modern accounting, noting how software solutions have streamlined many of the tasks traditionally performed by accountants. The final section of the document provides a summary of the key findings and offers recommendations for future research and practice. It concludes by reiterating the importance of transparency and accountability in all financial reporting.

and desperate enterprise was, that he was, under the orders of Colonel Charles R. Lowell, Second Massachusetts Cavalry, leading a charge of a squadron of the Third New Jersey Cavalry, and that he did not discover, until among the enemy, that the squadron that had been following him at a charge had wheeled about and left him unsupported and alone, and that rather than surrender, he determined upon the bold project of attempting to break through the Confederate column and escape from the other side. It came near being a success, and at the same time his escape from death was almost a miracle. This adventure ended the work of the day. Immediately after it, Captain Strother advanced with his regiment, but found that the Union force had retreated, and, as it was now dark, pursuit was impracticable. Beyond driving the Union troops from Waynesboro and inflicting some damage, the results to the Confederates were not very important. By some mischance, General Breckenridge's division of infantry did not get up in time to intercept the Federal force on the Staunton road.

A. D. PAYNE,

Late Captain of the Black Horse Troop,
(Co. 4,) Fourth Virginia Cavalry,

C. S. A.

WARRENTON, VA.



I had always supposed my horse was killed, but in Richmond, Virginia, in May, 1880, I was introduced by Captain H. C. Lee to Captain H. C. Ballard, who said he was with dismounted cavalry, acting as sharpshooters that day, that himself and a dozen others fired at me, and that the bullet glanced along the skull at the burr of the ear, stunning him for a time, but that the horse soon recovered and did good service afterwards in the Fourth Virginia Cavalry of the Confederate army.

G. N. B.

LYNCHBURG, VA., March 4, 1882.

CAPTAIN GEORGE N. BLISS, First Rhode Island Cavalry, late of U. S. A. :

DEAR SIR:—I am in receipt of your letter by this evening's mail, asking me to give you an account, from a Confederate standpoint, of the action on the 28th of September, 1864, at Waynesboro, Augusta county, Virginia, between the cavalry under my command and the Federal cavalry, commanded by General Torbert. I very much regret that I have no



data at hand in the shape of a report from the commanding officers of either of the four regiments, or from Captain Johnston, commanding the battery attached to my brigade. So much time has elapsed since those scenes occurred, my memory cannot be trusted. Reading your narrative has recalled to my mind many points, but it is impossible for me to particularize lest I may do injustice to some of the noble and glorious spirits who so generously sustained me upon all occasions when their best efforts were required. My brigade was composed of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Virginia Cavalry, A. N. V., and Captain Johnston, of the Horse Artillery, with two guns, was serving with me that day, when we left our camp near Weyer's cave.

My orders from General Early, commanding the Valley District, were to move at once to Waynesboro, and attack the Federal cavalry who had gone there to cut the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and to destroy the iron bridge over the Shenandoah river between Waynesboro and the mouth of the tunnel at the Blue Ridge. I was notified that we would be supported by the infantry. Having the advantage of a company in my command whose homes were in that county, (Captain McCluny, First Virginia Cavalry,) instead of taking the most direct road to

Waynesboro, which I knew was heavily picketed by the Federal cavalry, I secured a guide who carried me by a blind road through the "old coaling," along the foot-hills of the Blue Ridge, which had not been used for years, but with the assistance of a few axes we soon made it so that the artillery could accompany us; indeed, their indomitable spirit was such that they would go wherever we could go. Coming out by this blind road, where we were least expected, I found the Federal cavalry hard at work endeavoring to destroy the railroad bridge. I crossed the main road half a mile from the mouth of the tunnel which was guarded by a *malitia* force, consisting of the reserves from Staunton and Waynesboro, under Colonel Leo, but who had withdrawn to the top of the mountain. From this point I could see the Federal picket. Dismounting the First, Second and Third Regiments, I ordered the Fourth Regiment, Colonel William B. Wooldridge commanding, to charge this picket, mounted, and deploying the three dismounted regiments, moved rapidly to the attack. Captain Johnston's guns were pushed up at a swift trot to a commanding position and used most effectively. Perceiving that my attack from that unexpected quarter was a surprise, I was not slow to push my advantage, and pushing steadily for-

ward, I drove the force from the bridge and saved it. Meeting a stout resistance at the river, where we lost some good men, I soon cleared my approach to it with my artillery, driving the Federals through the town of Waynesboro. General Early, by this time, had arrived with the infantry *via* regular road on the northwest of the town, and a few artillery shots from General John Pegram's command started General Torbert to change his base. I more than regret that I cannot here give a detailed account of this fight; no record has ever been made of it; we were so constantly engaged during those stirring times, no opportunity was afforded us for elaborate reports. I well remember the good services of Captain Henry C. Lee, A. & I. G.; Major J. W. Tayloe, A. A. A. G.; Rev. Randolph McKim, Chaplain of Second Regiment Regular Cavalry, acting A. D. C.; Colonel Cary Breckenridge, Second Virginia Cavalry; Colonel William B. Woolridge, Fourth Virginia Cavalry; Colonel W. A. Morgan, First Virginia Cavalry, and Lieutenant-Colonel Field, Third Virginia Cavalry, were never wanting upon any field, and gave me their best efforts and support upon that occasion.

In fighting over our battles, as all good soldiers love to do with those who went hand in hand to-

gether, I have frequently had the incidents you recalled in your letter, mentioned by those of us who witnessed it, and it affords me pleasure to say it was worthy of a better support than you received from the ranking officer ordering the charge, or the men who should have followed. A little dare-deviltry in a cavalry officer sometimes acts like magic; a few dashing fellows, well led, have turned a victory from one side to a rout on the other, without any cause. As we are strangers, neither being able to recognize the other were we to meet, I can only say your courage will never be doubted by any Confederate who saw your manly bravery in the fight, and you may thank a kind Providence that you are now alive to tell your own story in your own way. You have spoken in a manly and generous way of what passed in our lines. When I saw you at night, sitting behind a Confederate cavalryman, with the blood streaming down your face, going to the rear, a prisoner, I said to Doctor Randolph, brigade surgeon, that you were one of the "widow's son party." He being one of the elder brothers, replied, "I'll see your mother's son well taken care of this night," and as most of the staff officers were of the clan, they did the best they could for a brother in trouble.

I am not a mason, but most of my staff were ma-

sons, and I know they frequently did many things that seemed to give them extra pleasure, for the unfortunate on the other side. I was sure the institution was full of good works, and, although I was only a poor soldier who tried to do his duty, without being a mason, I believed the organization was based upon Christian principles, and was always in sympathy with the work of the fraternity.

I can only add that every true and generous soldier, on either side, was willing to extend the healing balm to friend or foe, after the battle was over.

Thanking you for your kind letter, and wishing you prosperity, I am, with much respect,

THOMAS T. MUNFORD,

Brig.-Gen. Cav., A. N. V. Late War.

P. S.—Should you ever come to Lynchburg again, I should be glad to meet you, and if I can give you any information connected with the operations of our cavalry during the war, will do so with pleasure. I was four years with the Army of N. V.

PORTLAND, ME., Dec. 16, 1879.

MY DEAR BLISS :—You ask me to give an account of my interview with Major Turner on the day you

were sent to the cells in the Libby. It was December 9, 1864; you came up from the hospital in the Libby, December 7, and it gave me much pleasure to greet an old college friend, even in such a place. During the following day, though we were interrupted by the visit of a committee of the Confederate Congress, who came to inquire into the condition of the prison, we recited our army experiences, and made ourselves as comfortable as the situation allowed. On Friday, December 9th, early in the forenoon, Captain Boice and Lieutenant Huff were sent to the cells. Not long after, Dick Turner came up stairs and called for Major Phillips, Lieutenant Towle and myself. Following him down stairs, we were shown into Major Turner's office, and were informed by the Major himself that we were to be sent to the cells and held as hostages for some men, bushwhackers, I inferred, who had been captured by our forces in the West, and sentenced to be hung. He then read an order from Commissioner Ould in reference to the matter.

Only a day or two before, I had found in a Richmond paper the following: "Roger A. Pryor has been set to Fort Lafayette. A Washington telegram says: 'Roger A. Pryor arrived here this morning and leaves to-night for Fort Lafayette. He at-

tracted much attention as he was escorted down the avenue to the old Capitol, under guard, and was recognized by many of his former acquaintances here.' It is probable that he will soon be returned, as it is understood that Captain Burrage, for whose capture he was taken, in retaliation, is to be returned." I called the attention of Major Turner to this announcement, and remarked that I thought he was complicating matters. He said that the fact in reference to Pryor had escaped his attention, and added, "I cannot take you." Then he turned to his list and said, "I will take Captain ———, — Massachusetts Volunteers, the name I have forgotten; it was a German name, and Turner asked if the officer he had selected was American born. When informed that he was a German, he ran his eye again over his list, saying, "I must have a Massachusetts officer." But finding none, he turned to Dick Turner, and said, "Bring down Captain Bliss, First Rhode Island Cavalry." I went up stairs with a sad heart, but remember well the bold face you put on as you packed up your things and followed Dick Turner down stairs. There was nothing I would not have given could I have recalled the suggestion which secured my own release at your expense. I had only one more day at the Libby before I was sent

with other prisoners to Danville, and we did not meet again until after the close of the war, but I was glad to learn that you were relieved and exchanged even before I was.

Always truly yours,

HENRY S. BURRAGE,

Captain Thirty-sixth Massachusetts Volunteers.

P. S.—The regiments of Captain Boice, Lieutenant Huff, Major Phillips and Lieutenant Towle I cannot give.

I enclose a scrap of paper which you sent to me during the first night, I think, you were in the cells; you sent it up by the officer of the guard. Upon the enclosed scrap of paper the following appears written with a lead pencil:

"CAPTAIN BURRAGE:—Please deliver my money to Lieutenant Adams, who will give it to me. We are all 5 in one cell, 8ft. by 12 ft.; the floor is of wood, raised about 12 inches above the ground; we have a fire, but find it cold nights. Tell Trippe, C. S., to send down the articles we sent out for. We do not know yet for whom we are held.

"Yours truly,

"G. N. BLISS.

"P. S.—We are all well.

G. N. B."

BUCKINGHAM C. H., VA., June 21, 1884.

CAPTAIN GEORGE N. BLISS, No. 2 College street,
Providence, R. I. :

MY DEAR CAPTAIN :—I regret exceedingly that so much time has elapsed, and that I should have delayed you so much in your publication of the Waynesboro fight, but my time has not been my own, and I am a poor hand in the descriptive line, albeit it is about the late war, in which you and I took so active a part.

I think it was in the afternoon of the 28th day of September, 1864, when we first met; it has been so long my memory may fail me, and I have not visited the ground since the war, but I am sure I state the prominent facts. I made a charge with my squadron and met you with a regiment near a house on the right of the street, near the top of a hill, in Waynesboro. Your regiment came in good order until within one hundred yards of my command, when it deserted you with the exception of two men, who followed you. Your men had placed a barricade across the street which you and one of your men leaped, and at that point I engaged you with the sabre, and was at once put on the defensive by your superior swordsmanship, which kept me active to prevent a thrust from you. At this juncture

I received a pistol wound from the man who followed on your right, which so disabled me that I had to abandon the fight; my horse reared and plunged to the rear, my bridle hand being disabled by the wound referred to above, when you spurred up and struck me with your sabre on the back of the head; I tried to draw my pistol, but having my sabre knot over my wrist and being disabled in the bridle hand, I could not do so, and you passed me, striking two of my men just in front of me. Captain H. C. Lee has told me that he met you afterwards, and that you had requested him to give you his recollections of the affair. At this point my memory ceases until a later hour, about dark, when I became conscious and was in an ambulance, and some one said there was a "Yankee officer," badly wounded, and would I let him ride in the ambulance. I said, "Certainly, bring him in;" you took the seat with the driver, but becoming faint, said you must lie down; the surgeon had given me some apple brandy and I gave you some, which revived you, and we had a conversation which satisfied me that you were the officer who wounded me. My brother, Beverly T. Moss, now of Surry County, Virginia, who in that day's fight had gotten his leg shattered, but who, with unusual fortitude, had for-

gotten himself in his effort to take care of me, (I was shot through the left breast,) said he would go and give you some breakfast if his leg was well enough, and did hobble away, and came back and said you could not eat, and said if he could he would search the man out who had stolen your boots, but he was not able to walk.

I have stated little incidents connected with the Waynesboro fight, and will thank you to put me right where I may be in fault as to dates.

Very truly your friend,

W. A. Moss,

Late Captain Co. K, Fourth Virginia Cavalry.

114 WEST GRACE STREET, }
RICHMOND, VA., July 20, 1884. }

CAPTAIN GEORGE N. BLISS, Providence, R. I. :

MY DEAR CAPTAIN :—I found your letter of the 18th inst. here when I came up from the office last night, and in reply will say that it is so long since the event occurred that I can't give you many details. The war to me now is like a panorama. With us in the cavalry, marching night and day, as we

were constantly doing, the events ran into each other, and it is hard to get hold of dates ; but as you have kindly furnished me with this one, I shall begin, only hoping that Mrs. Bliss and the little Blisses may think I did right.

I was at that time, the 28th of September, 1864, the day of the fight at Waynesboro, Virginia, the Adjutant and Inspector-General of Wickham's Cavalry Brigade, Fitzhugh (Fitz.) Lee's Cavalry Division, Stuart's Cavalry Corps, Army of Northern Virginia. Our brigade was then composed of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Regiments of Virginia Cavalry, and we generally had a battery of Stuart's Horse Artillery with us ; at that time I think we had Johnston's Battery of the S. H. A. As you have probably learned, our corps, divisions, brigades and batteries were called after their commanders. You tell me you have heard from some others of our command, and among them, General Munford, then the Colonel of the Second Regiment, so I shall merely begin at the fight. As you are probably aware, we were sent to prevent the destruction of the railroad bridge over the river, near Waynesboro, where the Virginia Central (now Chesapeake & Ohio) Railroad crossed. We were informed that you were destroying that bridge. From

our marching on the blind road, on the side of the Blue Ridge Mountains, we were not very well closed up when we struck the turnpike, near Waynesboro, and it was from this fact that I had the opportunity of serving you. When we struck the turnpike we were between your forces and your pickets, which we captured, and you did not know of our coming. As we neared the town, our advanced guard reported a regiment of cavalry watering at the stream just east of the town. Orders were sent to our regiments to close up as rapidly as possible, but being strung out so badly, it was hard to do. Our order of marching was the order of regiments; thus, on one day the First Regiment would be in front, next the Second, next the Third, etc., and our horse artillery in rear, so you see if the First was in front the Fourth would be in the rear, and if the Fourth was in front the Third would be in the rear, the order of marching, Fourth, First, Second and Third and battery. On this day the First was in front, and was dismounted and sent down the railroad; the Second and Third Regiments were also dismounted when they came up, and sent down the dirt road; the Fourth was sent forward mounted, and Johnston's Battery was placed on a knoll between the road and the railroad, from which point they did, as they gen-

erally did, some pretty good work. The first squadron of the Fourth, Captain Hill's, I think, was ordered to charge, which they did, gallantly, and some prisoners were taken by them, for I had the pleasure, having gone ahead with orders, of taking two of your men in this charge, for I needed a horse, but neither of them was worth much. This squadron was met with a volley from the enemy and were somewhat scattered; then the next squadron, Captain Moss's, was sent forward, and they charged up into the town; the remainder of the Fourth supported it. Just as Captain Moss got into town, owing to the Third not being up, and the Second not well in position, I was sent forward by Colonel Munford, who was then commanding our brigade, to halt the squadron of the Fourth, and as I was galloping up one side (the right) of these squadrons, (we were in column of fours) I saw you galloping down on the other side. Knowing you would be looked after, particularly as you were alone, I kept on and halted the head of the troops, and then I saw your men going in the opposite direction; these are the ones you told me, when I first saw you after the war, you expected to lead in the charge against us, and thought were following you, I think you called them the "Butterflies." My orders were

also to bring our troops back that had been sent up on the road to the right, the First Regiment, for we were nearly into Sheridan's camp, and were fearful that your troops might sweep down this street and cut this party off, and it was as I was returning and had gotten to this corner, that I saw your horse fall, and three or four of our men with you. As I passed you, you called out for relief as a mason, and making a sign which I recognized, I ordered our men to let you alone, take you to the rear and see that you were attended to, as you seemed to be wounded. I had to go on to bring our troops back and, although you said something to me, I had no time to stop. One of our men was about to kill you when I got to you, and informed me that you had badly wounded Captain Moss, and had struck somebody else, I have forgotten now who, and thought it was wrong for me to interfere. When I came back, of course you were gone, and the horse too, I think, and I never saw you again until you came down to see me here in 1880. I heard that you and Captain Moss were carried back in the same ambulance, and Moss, having some "apple-jack," our national drink, you took a drink together. The next I heard of you, you had been sent to Richmond. I did not have an opportunity of seeing you when you were sent to the rear.



I was tired, besides I had been struck on the inside of the right leg by a carbine ball and had my horse wounded at the same time, when your men fired from the creek, and my leg was sore. My horse was a fine grey one, and captured from your people by one of Moseby's men, and I got him from him. After he was struck he bled pretty freely; the ball struck him in the right front shoulder, just above his U. S. mark. As I rode back on the knoll, where the artillery was, Lieutenant Willie Hoxton, of the S. H. A., seeing the parts torn from my leg where I had been struck, thought the horse's blood was mine. I shall never forget the look on his young and handsome face when he asked me if I had been that badly hurt, and the relief he seemed to feel when I showed him where the horse was struck. This horse was afterwards shot in one of the skirmishes on the retreat from Richmond, when I was riding him. I sent him back to the wagon train. There he was captured by your cavalry in some dash on the train. I was sorry to lose "Pip," which had been with me in some right tight places. I would have liked to have had him in peace, instead of the miserable glass-eyed little Yankee pony on which I was paroled. Neither of the horses I got at Waynesboro were worth much. I turned one over with the pris-

oners, and had one kept for me, a large iron grey, which I afterwards traded off with one of our division headquarters couriers, and got a right good horse in return. I enclose you a memorandum of Major W. F. Graves, (who commanded the Second Regiment at that time), written last winter, when he was here as a member of the legislature. May be this will be of service to you. I made this a "heap" longer than I intended when I sat down. You can cull out from it what you want. With kind regards to Mrs. Bliss and yourself, from Mrs. Lee and myself, I am,

Very truly yours,

HENRY C. LEE.

Late Captain and A. A. and I. G. P. A. C. S.

MAJOR W. F. GRAVES' MEMORANDUM.

At the battle of Waynesboro, on September 28, 1864, the Second Regiment of Virginia Cavalry was dismounted and took position on a ridge just to the left of the turnpike leading from Charlottesville to Waynesboro, said ridge overlooking said town. When the charge was made by the Confederate forces, the Second Regiment pushed forward, sup-

ported by the Fourth Regiment, Virginia Cavalry, which was mounted, driving the enemy back. When the Federal forces fell back, there was a Federal quartermaster, by the name of Bliss, who volunteered to lead a charge to counteract the advance of the Confederate cavalry. The charge was made by the said officer solitary and alone, without his companions following and supporting him, cutting right and left with his sabre, until he reached a point, as well as I can remember, near the centre of the town, when his horse was shot down. Several Confederate soldiers had their guns and pistols raised to fire upon said officer, when he gave the masonic sign of distress, which was recognized by Captain Henry C. Lee, as he was a free mason, thus saving the life of as brave a soldier as ever drew a sabre in the Federal cavalry. I was an eye witness to the foregoing, and was not more than fifteen or twenty paces from him when his horse was shot down.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,
BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THIRD SERIES—No. 7.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY
1884.

[Edition limited to two hundred and fifty copies.]

PROVIDENCE PRESS COMPANY, PRINTERS.

SERVICE WITH BATTERY F,
FIRST RHODE ISLAND LIGHT ARTILLERY,
IN NORTH CAROLINA.

BY

PHILIP S. CHASE,

[Late Second Lieutenant Battery F, Rhode Island Light Artillery.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY
1884.

SERVICE WITH BATTERY F,
FIRST RHODE ISLAND LIGHT ARTILLERY,
IN NORTH CAROLINA.

January 1, 1863, the troops in and around Newbern, North Carolina, were enjoying a season of quiet in their camps, securing the needed rest for both men and horses, after the expedition to Goldsboro during the latter part of the preceding month.

The unsuccessful attempt of General Burnside with the Army of the Potomac to advance at Fredericksburg, and the return of that force to its camps on the north of the Rappahannock, was the principal subject of conversation at this time. Vague rumors reached us that General Burnside was not properly supported by some of his commanding officers, and an almost gloomy feeling seemed to have taken pos-

session of the whole force. General Burnside was loved by the troops in North Carolina, particularly that part of the force which accompanied him on the expedition to that State, and the expression of sympathy was well nigh universal, and in many instances concluded with remarks not complimentary to other officers, believing that jealousy was among the causes of the defeat.

Early in the month, orders were received at Department Headquarters to embark a force to co-operate with the naval forces in an attack upon Wilmington, North Carolina. Belger's Battery was assigned to this force. The pieces were dismounted, and loaded on board a schooner, and thirty-one horses put on another schooner. Lieutenant William A. Arnold, with a detail of men, accompanied them to Moorehead City, under sail, at which place the remaining officers and men were to join them on their arrival. On the twenty-fifth of January, Lieutenant Thomas Simpson, with forty men, was ordered to Moorehead City, by rail, to disembark the battery and return to Newbern; the horses were left on board and transferred to a battery of the Third

New York Artillery, in exchange for the same number from that command.

Major-General J. G. Foster, in a report to the committee on the conduct of the war, thus writes of this movement: "I received orders from Major General Halleck to co-operate with the naval forces in an attack on Wilmington, North Carolina. All the preparations were completed, and the troops about being embarked at Beaufort, North Carolina, when the news arrived of the foundering of the Monitor, at sea. The loss of this iron-clad, which was the only armored vessel in service, of sufficient light draught to enter the new inlet of Cape Fear river and take up position in reverse of the enemy's batteries on Federal Point, caused a change in the destination of the expedition. I was then ordered to take the expedition to South Carolina, and co-operate with Admiral Du Pont in the projected attack on Charleston, South Carolina.

"Accordingly, the fleet having on board about twelve thousand (12,000) men, the best troops in North Carolina, sailed from Beaufort harbor, North Carolina, on the second of February, 1863. Arriving at

Subscription price, Five Dollars per Annum in Advance. Single Copies, Fifteen Cents.
Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 3, 1917, under Post Office No. 383, at Chicago, Ill., under special rate of Post Office Department. Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917. Postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.
Postmaster: Send address changes in this journal to THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Published by the AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917. Postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.
Postmaster: Send address changes in this journal to THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Subscription price, Five Dollars per Annum in Advance. Single Copies, Fifteen Cents.
Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 3, 1917, under Post Office No. 383, at Chicago, Ill., under special rate of Post Office Department. Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917. Postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.
Postmaster: Send address changes in this journal to THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Published by the AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917. Postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.
Postmaster: Send address changes in this journal to THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Subscription price, Five Dollars per Annum in Advance. Single Copies, Fifteen Cents.
Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 3, 1917, under Post Office No. 383, at Chicago, Ill., under special rate of Post Office Department. Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917. Postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.
Postmaster: Send address changes in this journal to THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Published by the AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917. Postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.
Postmaster: Send address changes in this journal to THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Subscription price, Five Dollars per Annum in Advance. Single Copies, Fifteen Cents.
Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 3, 1917, under Post Office No. 383, at Chicago, Ill., under special rate of Post Office Department. Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917. Postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.
Postmaster: Send address changes in this journal to THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Copyright, 1919, by American Medical Association
Published by the AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917. Postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.
Postmaster: Send address changes in this journal to THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Subscription price, Five Dollars per Annum in Advance. Single Copies, Fifteen Cents.
Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 3, 1917, under Post Office No. 383, at Chicago, Ill., under special rate of Post Office Department. Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917. Postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.
Postmaster: Send address changes in this journal to THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Hilton Head, I paid my respects to Major-General Hunter. I then called on Admiral Du Pont to arrange the plan of the joint attack. The Admiral explained that he could not be ready in less than two weeks, in consequence of having to increase the thickness of the decks of the monitors. I then decided to profit by the delay in obtaining some 100-pound Parrotts for siege guns, and after informing General Hunter of my intention, left for Fortress Monroe for that purpose. After I left, General Hunter issued an order breaking up my organization, and merging my whole force into the small corps commanded by him. He also ordered my personal staff to leave his department forthwith. Under these circumstances I requested and obtained authority from General Halleck to return to North Carolina. The twelve thousand (12,000) picked men that were thus lost to my command were not used with any effect in conjunction with Admiral Du Pont's attack on Charleston; and the expedition thus failed."

The war correspondents' version of the trouble between Generals Hunter and Foster was somewhat

different from the report of General Foster, and short extracts from some of their letters may be of interest here. The New York *Herald* correspondent, under date of Port Royal, South Carolina, February 9, 1863, wrote :

"Foster's expedition is at a standstill — worse even, for the troops are disembarking from the transports, and taking up their quarters on St. Helena Island. All the mystery which enshrouded the expedition for so many weeks is thus useless, and many days must elapse before anything can be achieved by it. Reports are rife as to disagreements between Generals Hunter and Foster, and it would seem as though the authorities at Washington had re-enacted the Butler-Banks embroglio with still worse results. General Hunter, however, does not seem disposed to leave his department, but as it is clearly impossible for two heads of departments to live amicably in the same locality, one of them vacates and goes North for additional instructions. General Foster leaves to-morrow by the 'Arago,' and you must not, therefore, expect to hear anything further from this expedition for at least three weeks to come."

The same correspondent under date of February 11, 1863, wrote :

"The vessels comprising the expedition which sailed from Beaufort, North Carolina, on the twenty-ninth ult., have lain quietly at anchor in Port Royal harbor ever since their arrival. Up to to-night the troops on board of them have not, in a single instance, reported for duty to General Hunter, in whose department they are located. General Foster, their former commander, followed them hither a few days after their arrival, made an excursion to Warsaw and Ossibau sounds, went on a reconnoitering trip to Folly river, and left yesterday for North Carolina again, having, during his stay, not only failed to report for duty to General Hunter, but, as I learn, having issued an order, just prior to his departure, placing his corps under General Naglee's command, and assuring his troops that his column was in every way distinct and separate from General Hunter's department."

The *Boston Journal* contained the following under date of Moorehead City, February 12, 1863 :

"This morning the steamer 'S. R. Spaulding' came

in from Port Royal with Major-General Foster and staff, who is on his way to Washington to see whether himself or General Hunter shall command the expedition now off the South Carolina coast. General Hunter is commander of that Department, and General Foster is commander of the North Carolina Department. The latter having entered where General Hunter has jurisdiction, the latter, being senior officer also, intends to be commander. General Foster demurs, takes the 'Spaulding,' and steams for headquarters. So the expedition is delayed—so the country suffers—so expectations vanish—so hopes fade.”

After the departure of General Foster for the North, General Hunter issued the following order :

“HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTH, }
 HILTON HEAD, PORT ROYAL, S. C., }
 February 19, 1863. }

“Special Orders, No. 97.

“Two members of General Foster’s staff, now sojourning within the limits of this department, having been engaged in sending North a steamer belonging to this command, and necessary for the operations

about to commence — such steamer being sent away clandestinely, and without the knowledge, consent, or order of the Major-General commanding — and it being found that many, if not all, the members of General Foster's staff have indulged in statements and remarks tending to create disaffection, insubordination and mutiny, it is hereby ordered that all the members of the staff of Major-General John G. Foster, commanding the Department of North Carolina, now within the limits of the Department of the South, shall quit this department by the first steamer going North.

“By command of Major General D. HUNTER,

“CHARLES G. HALPINE,

“Assistant Adjutant General,

“Tenth Army Corps.”

General Hunter issued General Order No. 13, which incorporated the troops from North Carolina as a part of the Tenth Corps, but on the twenty-third of February issued General Order No. 15, paragraph III of which revoked so much of General Order No. 13, as assigned the troops from North Carolina to

the Tenth Army Corps, and they remained a part of the Eighteenth Corps.

The affair was discussed editorially by the leading daily papers in the North, nearly, if not quite, all arguing against the course pursued by General Foster, and yet it does not appear that General Halleck intended the troops from General Foster's Department should be attached to General Hunter's command.

The order to "swap" horses with the New York battery we considered a bad bargain; we always took great pride in the appearance of our horses, and considered them worth, in every respect, much more than the ones we received by the change, but as we were not consulted on the subject or allowed to object, the trade was made.

At that time I held a warrant as Sergeant, but had been acting First Sergeant since the return from the Goldsboro expedition, where First Sergeant Massie was severely wounded. On the eighteenth of February, while on "battery drill," Captain Belger assigned the three ranking non-commissioned officers to the command of sections — platoons under Upton's

tactics—that is, acting as lieutenants. The Captain gave us lively work during that drill, and one of the results of that day's work occurred the next day as follows: The building occupied as barracks for the men was a large two-story house, with a piazza in front, which appeared to have been used in days past as a boarding-house. The front entrance was in the centre, with a large room on each side, that on the right being the Captain's office, and the one on the left the First Sergeant's room. I was sitting in my room after reveille roll-call attending to the duties of the hour, when the Captain walked in. I remember the incident as clearly as if it were but yesterday. Standing a few seconds looking at me he said: "Sergeant, write a recommendation for a commission for yourself, and I will sign it," and without further remark went to his office. After some time spent in anxious thought upon the subject, I ventured to write what I thought to be a good document of the kind wanted, and took it to the Captain; he read it through, and without a word of comment tore it into small pieces, and throwing it away, said: "I will write it myself." The recommendation was for-

warded to Rhode Island, and in course of time a vacancy occurred — Lieutenant William A. Arnold having resigned — and I received an appointment as Second Lieutenant, was assigned to the same battery, and on the seventeenth day of May, 1863, was mustered as such.

February 27th, 1863, the rain fell in torrents, and unfortunately for the troops at Newbern, that was the day assigned for a formal flag raising at General Foster's quarters. As there were no postponements on account of the weather, the ceremonies took place according to programme, which included two salutes by Battery F: the first, a national salute, early in the exercises, and later a Major-General's salute, the whole closing with a review by General Foster. Notwithstanding the weather, every part of the programme was carried out with military precision.

These incidents of flag raisings, salutes, parades, etc., may seem to some, especially those who were attached to the Army of the Potomac, as uncalled for and out of place, considering the duty for which we were called into service, but it must be remem-

bered that the troops at Newbern were performing what might be termed garrison duty in a city taken from the enemy, and even then almost within the enemy's lines, whose *white* inhabitants — those that remained — were not altogether friendly to its occupancy by the United States forces, and without doubt these demonstrations had the effect of proving to them that our troops were well drilled, well disciplined, well equipped, and in every way prepared to defend the Union and the flag we upheld.

From this time until March 6th, 1863, the usual routine of camp duties continued, when, in obedience to orders, the battery left quarters in the early morning to join another expedition into the country. Trenton, North Carolina, was reached at about 10 o'clock, A. M., March 7th; then the command returned a part of the distance and took a road leading towards Wilmington, North Carolina; at about 9 o'clock, P. M., bivouaced at "Young's Cross Roads;" next morning the right section, under command of Lieutenant Simpson, in company with a part of the Third New York Cavalry, proceeded to within nine miles of Jacksonville, North Carolina,

and returned. This expedition remained out five days without meeting the enemy in any considerable force. The battery arrived back in its quarters soon after 4 o'clock, P. M., March 10th. The record says: "No engagements; distance travelled about eighty-five miles."

I suppose these expeditions into the country, without any apparent object in view, were planned for the purpose of ascertaining if any considerable force of the enemy was in our immediate vicinity, and may be looked upon as wise precautions taken by the commanding officers to prevent surprises upon and consequent disaster to our troops; but as I remember the thoughts of an enlisted man at the time, they seemed to be for the sole purpose of reminding us that we were in the field for active duty, and were expected to be marching or fighting most of the time. Undoubtedly they were important for both reasons, as they did prevent the enemy coming upon us unawares, and there might have been danger of our forgetting to a certain extent the active duties required, in the quiet occupancy of comfortable quarters in the city.

Early in March, signs of unusual activity within the rebel lines were noticed. The Raleigh (N. C.) *Progress*, (rebel), in its issue of March 1, 1863, had the following: "We are glad to learn that General D. H. Hill passed down on Tuesday to assume the command that has been tendered him in North Carolina, with the headquarters at Goldsboro. We have had vastly too much strategy, too much science, and too much ditching and digging in North Carolina. Had we had less of these and more fighting things might have been better than at present; and as General Hill has established a reputation for being one of the best fighting men in the service, we may expect a change in management, if not a 'change in base' in North Carolina. We do not expect any advance from Newbern for some time to come; but the small force of Yankees at this place will have to make occasional raids to keep themselves employed and to keep our people alarmed and excited. These raids we hope in future will be confined to a very small circle around Newbern, and that if they attempt any extensive depredations they will be promptly met and whipped back. If this is not to

be done, we see no use in keeping any force in North Carolina. There can be no doubt, we think, but General Hill is or soon will be in command below; and we can promise the people of the State that whatever can be done by him for their relief and protection will be done."

The thirteenth and fourteenth days of March, 1863, were days of excitement in and around Newbern, caused by the appearance of General D. H. Hill, with a force estimated at about sixteen thousand men, in our front. On the thirteenth, the pickets on the Trent road were driven in, and troops were sent out from the city to reinforce that point. Battery F was ordered to proceed to Deep Gully, a position near the outpost on this road, arriving there early in the evening of the same day, and remained in position through the night, returning to the city on the morning of the fourteenth.

The enemy advanced on Newbern in three columns; the main force by the Trent road, which leads direct to the city; a column by way of Trenton and Pollockville, which approached on our left; and a column which came down the north bank of the

Neuse river and appeared upon our extreme right. The columns approaching our left and centre made no serious demonstration beyond driving in the pickets; but the column on our right, across the Neuse river, seemed to be charged with the duty of capturing our small force on that side of the river, which, at this time, consisted of the Ninety-second New York Volunteers, about four hundred strong, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson, occupying a small unfinished earthwork. Daylight of the fourteenth found the enemy about four thousand strong, with eighteen pieces of artillery in position, under command of General Pettigrew, before this earthwork. General Pettigrew sent a summons to Colonel Anderson to surrender, saying that he had a large force prepared to reduce the work, but to avoid unnecessary destruction of life he would give an opportunity to capitulate, which magnanimous offer was refused, and he opened fire. This day was the first anniversary of the capture of Newbern by General Burnside, and undoubtedly the time was chosen with reference to that fact. We had no artillery on that side of the river, but a New York bat-

tery of heavy guns was placed in position on the opposite bank within easy range of Pettigrew's troops. The gunboat "Hunchback" ran up the river and trained her guns upon the enemy. The Ninety-second New York remained under cover of the earthwork, protected from the fire of Pettigrew's guns, prepared to repel an assault should one be made.

During the morning a force of infantry was successfully sent across the river, and the fire from the gunboat and battery proving too much for the endurance of Pettigrew's troops, he withdrew. The destruction of life which he was anxious to avoid, occurred entirely within his own command, and the only casualties on our side were two men of the Ninety-second New York, wounded.

Thus ended very unexpectedly what promised to be a determined effort to recover Newbern to Confederate control, and to drive the Union troops from the shores of North Carolina.

It would appear that the enemy in our front and left were waiting for the success of General Pettigrew on our right, and had he been successful in capturing the small force of infantry in his front, or

driving them across the river, the result might have been very different, for with a large force well supplied with artillery, posted on the east bank of the Neuse river, the city could have been easily shelled, and although the crossing of the river would have been very difficult, and it is doubtful if with the force at his command it could have been done, the effect would have been to draw troops from our front to prevent the crossing, thus weakening the lines and making a direct attack on that point more sure of success.

Upon the failure of General Pettigrew, the enemy withdrew from around Newbern, and their next movement was upon Washington, North Carolina.

The prophecy of the Raleigh *Progress* seemed to be correct. General Hill had inaugurated offensive operations in North Carolina, and our troops were put upon the defensive for the time being, although the campaign was of short duration.

March 30th, the enemy appeared before Washington, N. C., and commenced a siege of the place. Communication was entirely cut off, and General Foster, with a force of about twelve hundred men,

consisting of the Twenty-seventh and Forty-fourth Massachusetts Infantry, a part of the Third New York Artillery, and Third New York Cavalry, and the First North Carolina Volunteers, were completely shut in with a small supply of ammunition and rations. I believe there were one or more gunboats in front of the town, which were also shut in.

Washington, North Carolina, is situated on the Pamlico river, near the mouth of the Tar river, distant from Newbern by land from twenty-five to thirty miles, and by water something over one hundred miles. Several strong batteries on the banks of the river below the town, together with a barricade across the channel, effectually prevented the passage of gunboats or supply vessels to the relief of the little garrison, so it was thought, but subsequent events caused a change of opinion on that point.

April 8th, a comparatively small force, under the command of Brigadier-General T. B. Spinola, left Newbern to march overland to the relief of General Foster, and by attacking the enemy in the rear, raise the siege and liberate the garrison. Battery F accompanied this command. The troops met with

no resistance until on the ninth of April, Blount's creek, a stream sufficiently large to require a bridge for crossing, was reached. Here the enemy were found with artillery posted to resist further advance. As our advance reached this bridge, it was found to have been rendered impassible by removing the plank flooring, and a halt at once took place. I remember the road we were on lay through a heavily wooded country, and when the battery, which was near the right, halted, there was no position to be seen sufficiently open for artillery maneuvering. We were directed to open fire, and Captain Belger ordered "action left," as we stood in the road. While the Captain was superintending the movements of the first piece, accompanied by myself — being First Sergeant at the time — and the two buglers, and before a shot had been fired by us, he was severely wounded in the thigh by a ball from a case shot from the enemy's guns, which exploded directly in our front, killing the Captain's horse and two battery horses. This shot was the first from the enemy, and I think the result was not proof of proficiency on the part of the gunner, but rather a chance shot, for no other

during the hour which we were engaged did us any damage. In a very short time, considering the nature of the ground upon which we were, our guns were at work, and for an hour fired at, we did not know what, as nothing could be seen but woods. For a time, however, the shell and case shot which passed over our heads, and exploded in the woods in our rear, assured us that an enemy was somewhere in our front. I noticed but few troops pass to the front or right of our position in which direction the bridge lay, and if an effort was made to cross the bridge it must have been quickly abandoned, as the enemy's fire having ceased, we were ordered to cease firing and retire. Of course being an enlisted man, I was not in possession of that knowledge of the situation which the commanding general was supposed to have, but it seemed to me, and was freely talked among the men of the battery, that had the attempt been pushed, as it should have been, the result might have been different.

The return march commenced immediately, and at 4 o'clock, P. M., April 10th, we arrived at our quarters in Newbern with no other loss than that men-

tioned above. After Captain Belger had been placed in an ambulance and taken a short distance to the rear, I stripped his horse of its equipments, placed them in a baggage-wagon, and when the firing ceased, rode back to see if the Captain was comfortable. I found him stretched out in the ambulance, and upon inquiry as to his condition, was greeted with the reply, "The — cusses have got my horse," a spirited animal, prized very highly. I assured him his horse was dead, "dead as a door nail." He then said, "Well, they have got my equipments," and not until I had explained to him that the equipments were safe, did he reply to my inquiry. Evidently he had been imagining, as he lay helpless in the ambulance, his favorite horse, well equipped, being ridden by some confederate officer, and the thought was troubling him more at that moment than his own condition.

The official report of the operations of the battery on this expedition, made by First Lieutenant Thomas Simpson, who succeeded Captain Belger in command, states that during the engagement on the ninth, "three hundred and two (302) rounds of

ammunition, principally case shot and shell," were expended.

The next movement for the relief of the garrison at Washington, occurred on the night of April 12th, when the steam transport "Escort," with the Fifth Rhode Island Volunteers on board, and a supply of ammunition and stores, ran the batteries on the river, and arrived safely at the wharf in Washington without loss. On the 14th, General Foster returned with the same steamer by daylight. In passing the batteries on the return trip, the steamer received forty-seven shots, losing the pilot, killed, and seven of the crew killed or wounded.

Referring to the attempt of General Spinola to reinforce General Foster or raise the siege, a report was printed in the New York *Tribune*, on the authority of a "gentleman who came from Newbern, a passenger on board the 'Mary Sanford,' that about fifty men of one of the Rhode Island batteries, who were with him, had volunteered to take the Rebel battery, and were about to do it, when one of General Spinola's aids rode up with peremptory order to retreat." Of course we do not know the name of

the gentleman, and cannot learn how he became possessed of so much knowledge, but I feel bound to state, in the interest of truth, that no Rhode Island artillery men volunteered to perform such duty, however brave and patriotic such action might have been. The men of the battery, except the sergeants, who carried sabres, were not armed, and it would have been a novel sight in war for fifty unarmed men to storm a battery in broad daylight.

General Foster arrived in Newbern from Washington, N. C., by the steamer "Escort," on the 14th of April, and on the 15th, with the force that could be collected in and around Newbern, amounting to about ten thousand men, started to return overland to the relief of the garrison, and to raise the siege. Battery F accompanied the expedition, being assigned to General Heckman's brigade. The command marched over the same route as was taken by General Spinola the previous week. On the 18th of April we arrived at Blount's Creek, found the bridge unprotected, and signs that the enemy were in full retreat, having abandoned the attempt to capture Washington and the small force defending it, as

they did the similar attempt upon Newbern the previous month, although a much more determined effort was made at the former place. After a short delay to repair the bridge over the creek, and render it passable for the troops, the force pushed forward, arriving at Washington during the afternoon of the 19th. The Battery remained outside until the 21st, when it entered the town. The enemy had entirely disappeared, evidently abandoning the siege, upon discovering that an unarmed wooden transport could safely pass their batteries on the banks of the Pamlico river, which were thought to have been an effectual blockade.

The Battery remained at Washington until April 28th, when it returned to its quarters at Newbern by transport, arriving soon after midnight, having been absent twelve days. I am not competent to criticise the movements of either side during the campaign which commenced early in March, with the attempt to capture Newbern, and which ended on the 19th of April, when the enemy had retreated and disappeared from before Washington. The slight losses of men and material would seem to indicate that the

movements of both armies were easily resisted ; that there was a lack of that persistence which insured success ; and compared with the desperate encounters of the later campaigns of the war, were not much more than skirmishes.

The health of the men continued good, six only being absent sick, one of whom had not recovered from wounds received in December previous.

The alterations and casualties in the battery during the four months covered by this paper, left the aggregate of commissioned officers one more, and enlisted men four less, than it was on the first day of January, 1863, and is accounted for as follows : Second Lieutenant Albert E. Adams, whose appointment dated December 4, 1862, joined for duty January 5, 1863. Four enlisted men were discharged ; two to accept promotion, viz. : First Sergeant Alexander M. Massie, as Second Lieutenant in the Third Regiment, Rhode Island Heavy Artillery, subsequently transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps, and Quartermaster Sergeant Walter M. Knight, as Second Lieutenant, Battery H, First Rhode Island Light Artillery ; and two on Surgeon's certificate of dis-

ability, viz.: privates John Wood, at Newbern, January 14th, 1863, and Philip L. Bassett, at Annapolis, Md., December 2, 1862, information of which was received at the battery February 10, 1863. There was no gain during this period, consequently the strength of the battery April 30th, as appears upon the monthly return bearing that date, was five commissioned officers, and one hundred and thirty-four enlisted men, with six twelve-pounder Napoleon guns—light twelves we called them—caissons, etc., complete, and one hundred and two horses. An addition of sixteen enlisted men would have given the maximum number allowed.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,
BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THIRD SERIES—NO. 8.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
1884.

PROVIDENCE PRESS COMPANY, PRINTERS.

REMINISCENCES
OF
GUNBOAT SERVICE
ON THE NANSEMOND,

BY
FRANK B. BUTTS,
[Formerly Paymaster's Clerk, United States Navy.]

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
1884.



[Edition limited to two hundred and fifty copies.]



REMINISCENCES
OF
GUNBOAT SERVICE ON THE NANSEMOND.

The fourth day of January, 1863, I went on board the United States ship "Brandywine," in Hampton Roads, Virginia, with the surviving crew of the wrecked iron-clad steamer "Monitor," for a settlement of accounts, and to be supplied with food and clothes. The only clothing I had was a flannel jumper, a pair of trousers, and stockings. As some others of those rescued from the disaster did not have any more, and none had a complete suit, we were unfit for sea service at that season of the year. Owing to delay in making up the accounts of the crew, it was nearly two months before any clothing was issued, and notwithstanding we were partially furnished by the kind-hearted sailors of the "Brandywine," we were in a most destitute condition.

Our suffering for these necessities and for hammocks was constantly wearing upon our health, and great dissatisfaction and growling prevailed. At last, in about two months we were allowed to draw new clothing from the ship. This transaction, together with my first fit-out, cost me nearly a hundred dollars, which made me indebted to the government in quite a sum,—I mean quite a sum for a landsman at the rate of twelve dollars per month to pay. With this and a subsequent loss of my clothes I should have owed the government twenty dollars when my time was out, if I had not been promoted and received increased pay. Soldiers have a liberal allowance for clothing, but man-of-war's-men are charged with everything they get, except food and hammock.

The "Monitor's" crew was then distributed among different vessels of the squadron, and I, with three old shipmates and four men from the rendezvous, or shipping office, were given passage on the transport steamer "Argo," with orders to report to the commander of the gunboat "Stepping Stones," then lying at Suffolk, in the Nansemond river. We bade farewell to our old comrades, not one of whom

I have since seen, and left Hampton Roads about noon. Owing to a very low tide when we entered the Nansemond, and the seemingly persistent efforts of our pilot to run across the sand-bars, we did not reach Suffolk until late at night. After landing on the wharf we hailed the "Stepping Stones," and, in answer to our explanations, a boat was sent for us and we were taken aboard. I had been intrusted with the responsibility of the party, and at once reported to the commander, delivered some papers and the mail, and, without ceremony or opportunity to see the faces of those on deck, or learn what kind of a vessel the "Stepping Stones" was, we were shown to the berth-deck. I was not long in hanging my hammock and getting into it. After a few words with some persons in their hammocks whom I could not see, I went to sleep and heard nothing more until all hands were piped up the next morning.

When I had been on deck and made the acquaintance of the men who were to be my companions, I was delighted; for during my service in the navy I had been thrown in contact with men not at all agreeable, and on one vessel I could hardly find an asso-

ciate. The crew of the "Stepping Stones" were all young men, some were seamen, that is, they had been to sea before, while the others had lived near the sea-coast and knew something about a vessel before they entered the navy. They had entered the service from purely patriotic motives. I was never associated with such a fine body of men while either in the army or navy.

The "Stepping Stones" was what was known in the navy as a "ferry gunboat." Her armament consisted of eight twelve and twenty-four pounder smooth-bore and two twelve-pounder brass rifled howitzer cannons. They were mounted at either end of the vessel, and in action the whole battery could be trained toward the enemy, so that we had a broadside of ten guns, which was very formidable for a river gunboat. She also carried more than the usual quantity of small arms, in order to repel night attacks, which were not infrequent to vessels lying in narrow rivers. Muskets, hand-grenades, boarding-pikes, cutlasses, carbines and revolvers were always kept in hand or ready for use on ship, on picket, or for expeditions on shore. Those ac-

quainted with the history of such vessels will not dispute the words of Admiral S. P. Lee, that the crews of the river gunboats did more fighting and suffered more from the trials and exposure of war, than any other men, either in the army or navy.

The vessel was of light draft, and having both ends alike could navigate the smallest streams. I have known her to pass through such a narrow place that the water could not be seen by looking over the guards on either side, and both wheels would be digging into the mud in order to force a passage; and many times our boats were swept from their davits by the branches of trees. Previous to the attack on Suffolk by the confederate General Longstreet, our duties were to patrol the river in order to arrest those trying to cross, or carrying on trade or delivering messages to the enemy, it being the dividing line of our forces, and also to protect the inhabitants on our side from rebel raiders.

The Nansemond has its source in the Dismal Swamp, southeast of Suffolk, and is merely a rivulet until it reaches Suffolk, where it becomes navigable for vessels of light draft. The river seems to be

nearly on a level with tide-water; and bordering as it does on swampy lands, on one side or the other, its bed is left nearly bare at low water for a distance of three miles below or north of Suffolk, and if it were not for a sand-bar at a point made by the entrance of another stream, the river would be entirely drained. From this locality (Hill's Point, as it was known to us,) the river broadens to an average width of about a mile, and although the water is quite shallow except in the channel, it bears a pleasing prospect. The farms have an appearance of thrift and good management, and the dwellings and surrounding buildings have an unusual air of comfort and enterprise.

When the confederate force laid siege to Suffolk, I had been on the "Stepping Stones" about two months, and was well acquainted with all on board, and in the line of my duties I had learned the habits and the war sentiments of the people living near the river. Our work was principally at night, made necessarily so by the rebels, or those who were in league with them in carrying on trade across the river. Their plans were to watch the movements of the vessel,

and, by a well understood code of signals, arranged by passing a window with a lamp, they would cross the river, where they would meet friends and where wares would be exchanged for money, and mails taken into the rebel lines. It always seemed strange to me that this border between the conflicting territories should be so imperfectly guarded. It would not have been difficult for a cunning man to pass between Washington and Richmond continuously by this route. Our duties were to break up these operations, and to arrest those engaged therein when they were crossing the river; or, if the darkness was unfavorable, to capture them on shore. But it was only owing to some clumsy action of their own, like using lighted signals, that we ever caught them. Could it be expected of a single vessel to guard a narrow river a distance of eighteen miles against these communications? The most effectual way of preventing them was to destroy all the boats to be found, and we were so diligent in this work that the conspirators carried their boats on wagons to a safe distance within their lines.

The season was the opening of spring, the most

delightful of a southern climate. The trees were fresh in their mantles of green, and the roses were in bloom. We had enjoyed all the pleasures of gunboat service, and were more than an ordinarily happy crew. Nothing was thought of our daily duties, nor had we any care for the future. I have letters that were written to my parents at the period of which I am about to write, giving an account of each day's proceedings, by the aid of which I will commence a history of events during the siege of Suffolk.

I was dispatched from the vessel on the afternoon of the eighth of April, 1863, with orders to go as near Petersburg as necessary, to learn if any preparations were being made indicating an advance of troops. I proceeded alone, and by ten o'clock at night had reached Wakefield, a village, or rather station, on the Norfolk and Petersburg railroad. I made this point for the purpose of calling on a Union gentleman with whom I was acquainted, and from whom I expected to learn something concerning my errand. I was not disappointed in seeing him, and after some conversation he furnished me with a guide, an old colored servant, and told me where I

spread out before them. Ere the sun, just rising, had passed to his westward setting, many of these comrades would lie stark and cold upon that stubble field. They were to be the grain, and Death the harvester.

Our breakfast had extra relish from the milk we drank in our coffee, said lacteal fluid remaining from the excursion of Comrades Foster and Searls the evening previous. Soon after we "fell in," marched over the railroad, passed the mill and took a position in a public road crossing the river.

Of the principal items concerning the battle of Monocacy, fought July 9, 1864, between forces under command of the rebel General, Jubal Early, and the Union troops commanded by General Lew Wallace, it is unnecessary for me to write. Every history of the rebellion contains them. I am to state briefly only what I saw. The road in which we were standing had, towards the west, a steep bank surmounted by a high rail fence, *i. e.*, rails mortised into posts, not laid in the zigzag manner yeclaped Virginia. This we speedily destroyed by lifting posts and all from the ground. The battery that accom-

panied us had crossed the river and taken a position on the other side, commanding the entrance to the bridge. We advanced a little way into the field beyond the fence, the field whose crop of wheat had been taken off earlier in the morning. Here, just over the brow of a slight rise of land, we halted and remained in line till late in the afternoon. In an open wheat field one could not expect very much shade. We had not the least covering of any kind.

General Lew Wallace commanded on this day, at least so history states, and so it was reported among us; but few, if any, of us had ocular evidence of his presence. There was considerably more lying than fighting in this day's record. I have heard that General Wallace was repeatedly requested to give consent to the constructing of a small earthwork in front of our line, but he was unwilling that this should be done. At any rate, all the defense that any of us had was what we could make with bayonet and cup or spoon, scarcely more than a potato hill. As we lay in line there were not many casualties among us. There was a lively hum of bullets over our heads; now and then a shell would go shrieking

past. One exploded just above us, killing a man at my left.

While waiting here, rations were brought up and distributed, and, for the first and last time in my army experience, I saw sugar a drug in the market. Coffee, too, was in greater abundance than I had been accustomed to see. We first took our regular rations, then we went again and helped ourselves. The cause of this extraordinary profusion was evident in the large number of dead-beats who could be seen in the edge of a wood, a fourth of a mile away, who seldom performed any duty, save that of ration-drawing. We saw them looking with longing eyes at us as we filled up with the good things; but no one volunteered to carry them their share, and they were afraid to come after it. Consequently what we didn't take formed a slight repast for Johnny Reb some hours afterward. To more than a hundred men of my regiment this was the last ration-drawing for many months. Lest it might be thought that we had more than our share of camp followers and non-combatants, I would state that our regiment was recruited to its maximum number as heavy artil-

lery, its twelve companies having each more than two hundred men. The regiment was larger than some brigades.

The only thing that reconciled me to my own capture was the finding among the prisoners some of the fellows who, I knew, had, from their leafy cover, watched the distribution of rations on the day of the fight. They were men who carried camp kettles, had been detailed to assist the company and regimental officers, or in some way (there were numerous devices) had managed to beg off from regular duty. To-day such of them as survive are the men who tell the longest and most thrilling stories of what they did in the war. They sit on barrel heads around country grocery stores and astonish the rising generation with detailed accounts of their prowess. However, some of them didn't start early enough on their retreat from Monocacy, and the rebels "gobbled" them, thus giving them the one opportunity of their lives to honestly say that they suffered for their country. They are, doubtless, pension beggars already, telling in harrowing language the sacrifices they made for the cause.

At our right, across the river, our battery pounded away till it was deemed inexpedient to remain longer, when it withdrew, burning the bridge, as it and the men supporting it crossed. Regiment after regiment, including one battalion of our own, passed us at the left, moving out to the yard of the farm-house, and to a wheat field at its left. Surely no one ever had a better chance to see others fight than we had as we lay on the ground and saw the "fun" go on. The yard was surrounded by a thick hedge, along which our men stationed themselves, and thus, partially hidden, had an excellent opportunity to take certain aim at the rebels approaching, while the latter could return the fire only in general terms. In the wheat field at the left, the shocks were still standing, and behind these our skirmishers sheltered their bodies while they rained a destructive fire on the foe.

However, our time came at last. So long had we been idle spectators of the fray that any change was a relief. Ours was the color company, a fact that Captain Hyde repeatedly impressed upon us as we advanced. Colonel Seward, a son of the great Sec-

retary of State, is entitled to great credit for the soldierly way in which he led us up. I could but contrast his upright, manly bearing with the skillful dodging performed by some of the officers. What could be more ridiculous than a mounted officer trying to screen his own head behind that of his horse ! We advanced under a galling fire, both in front and flank, till we reached the border of our field. Here we were separated by a fence from a field of corn in tassel. The rebels were in there, for we could hear them, and their bullets were humming in a lively manner about us. We thrust our guns through the fence and fired, hit or miss, till ordered to fall back. I well remember the wounding of a sergeant near me and his going back, taking his gun with him. The chief cause of my recollection is his unwillingness to exchange guns with me, his being much better than mine, and I thought a poor gun would be good enough for him to throw away. But the enemy had thousands of men where we had hundreds, and to remain longer would have simply insured the capture of us all. The command soon came to fall back. Colonel Seward had been injured by a fall

from his horse, and was supported by two men on our retreat. On reaching the point held by us all through the day, the colors were planted and the Colonel shouted, "Rally around your flag, men." Instinctively I fell to humming the words of the song which everybody in those days sang :

"Rally 'round the flag, boys."

Again we moved forward a little way, but the rebels had climbed the fence and were bearing down upon us in great numbers. In our first retreat I had noticed many guns upon the ground, any one of them much better than mine, and my comrade Wheeler's gun was even worse than mine, not having a tube for the hammer to strike upon, so I gave my gun into his keeping while I ran forward and took my pick of weapons. Perhaps I ought to state that up to this time we had been armed with Harper's Ferry muskets. They were smooth bore, and carried one immense bullet and three smaller ones. I have since learned that the enemy claimed that there must have been several Gatling guns in front of them. Of course, then, to get weapons in which our car-

tridges could be used I must take those thrown away by our own men. This I had no difficulty in doing, and soon I was following the colors, having found good muskets for both Wheeler and myself.

Quite unskilled in the ethics of war, I had, however, long known that if I remained near the colors I couldn't be far amiss. "Elevate your pieces, men," was the direction given by a field officer as we moved confusedly back. The rebels were advancing regularly, and having everything their own way. Then came a command, from what source I never knew, to look out for ourselves, and this we did. The color sergeant of the Ninth was a German, and in broken English, with now and then a "damn" interpolated, he proclaimed the uselessness of staying there any longer. True to my ideas of the colors, I stuck by the sergeant till we had reached a sort of waste water running from the mill mentioned some pages back. Here I lost sight of him and the flag. I think he must have been a more rapid walker than myself.

To tell the truth, I didn't realize that we were whipped effectually. I knew that things were

mixed, but I confidently expected to find an orderly line somewhere which would stem the tide of retreat. Had I known then, as I afterward learned, that our general officers had for some time been making their way towards Baltimore, using for their trip the train standing on the track, I think I should have taken much longer steps. Wheeler and myself kept together till we reached a little branch of the Monocacy, through which he went regardless of depth, but I, not thinking the exigency sufficient for such carelessness, endeavored to encounter as little moisture as possible. Once across, I shouted my comrade's name, and even ran up and down the stream for a little way, hoping to see him, but without avail. Lee had surrendered before I saw him again. On I went over the railroad, following the greater number; but where it was to end, I hadn't the remotest notion. All this time, shot of assorted sizes was falling about us. The rebel artillery was giving us canister as fast as possible, and every few seconds some poor fellow would throw up his hands and go down, but the puffs of dust all about me, indicating the fall of a shot, told me that only one

missile in many score hurt any one. As I struck a wooded road, I saw before me a poor fellow staggering like a drunken man. His path could be traced by the blood streaming from his wound. Coming up with him, I found that one side of his face had been shot away, giving me a clear insight into his mouth. He appeared to be dazed or bewildered, and well he might be; but he still clung to all his equipments. "Why don't you throw away some of your things?" I at once asked. Apparently the idea had not occurred to him before, for he speedily dropped his gun, and, with my aid, was soon free from all his impedimenta. Straightening up, he shot ahead at a wonderful rate, completely distancing me. There were so many men all about me that the idea of running had not once entered my head. In fact, running from a field of battle did not comport with the dignified manner with which I thought troops ought to withdraw from a situation where they had been whipped. Another time I should have known better; but one must have experience in war as well as in anything else. By the roadside I passed my friends Foster and Searls; the latter badly wounded,

and Foster trying to help him. I never expected to see Searls again in this world, and so bade him "good-by." These two men were the ones whose guns I had carried the night before. It didn't take many hours in war times to make transformation scenes. Searls, however, did recover and live for about ten years, dying at last from his wounds. Foster was a fellow prisoner with me for some months.

My bump of curiosity, coupled with an acquisitive faculty, was the cause of my ruin or capture; it's all the same thing. Anything lying around loose was, in those days, accounted legitimate plunder. An exceedingly plethoric knapsack lying by the roadside tempted me beyond resistance. Had I realized the nearness of the foe, I would have thrown away my own burdens and have made haste from that locality. But all this is hindsight; what I lacked then was foresight.

The knapsack was a rich one. It must have been the property of one of the hundred day men who made up a part of the defending force, for no man who had had any experience in marching would have tolerated for an hour such a load. The owner, too,

was a Dutchman. This I knew from the German Bible and other literature in it. He also chewed tobacco, as I inferred from the large plug of "Navy" which it contained. I helped myself to an excellent pair of stockings and to the tobacco, already wondering with what one of the boys I would trade that, and for what, when my investigations and meditations were rudely interrupted with, "Look here, Yank!" Looking upward, I found myself gazing into the mouth of a six-shooter, held in the hand of a stalwart cavalryman. Resistance was out of the question, at least so it seemed to me. In fact, I was too much surprised for anything else than unconditional surrender.

A prisoner! One-half the meaning of that word I had never imagined, much less realized. "Let's have your money; damned quick, too," were the greeting words of my captor. At this I produced an old weather-beaten purse that a man belonging to an Ohio regiment had thrown away some weeks before. Its contents were just thirty-five cents in scrip. The disgust depicted on the cavalryman's face at this exposition was most intense.

In this position the fleet was engaged from noon until night without rest. The "Stepping Stones," as if angry to devour the rebels, or determined to rout them, would move forward within short canister range, but I think the enemy always got the best of us in these movements, they having dug holes in the earth, which protected them from injury, except from heavy shells. The loss was not trifling to us; three times we sent away the wounded to vessels down the river, and as many times were supplied with more men. It was a galling fire for so many hours. When the tide had flowed to its full height, the "Stepping Stones" endeavored to get a line to the unfortunate steamer, but was driven off. There were so many rifles covering the two vessels that one brave and daring sailor, too gallant for such a death, fell riddled with bullets, in attempting to pass a tow-line.

After a third trial the line was lassoed on to a fastening, and the "Mount Washington" was being towed out of her peril, when the tow-line parted by being hit, it was said, with a rebel shot. However, in another attempt we succeeded in making a per-

manent fastening, and the flag-ship was towed down the river amid the cheers of the whole fleet. It was almost sunset when the firing ceased.

Nothing in the events of the rebellion has to me so sad a reflection as the havoc of that day. It is sorrowful to recall the names of those brave and patriotic men who fell on the decks of the "Stepping Stones." As stated in the beginning of this paper, the crew of the "Stepping Stones" were of exceptional character for men in the navy during the war. They had left happy homes and entered the service from patriotic motives. That day nearly half the number, and many who had been sent from other vessels, fell, pierced by rebel bullets. One of them, a boy of my own age, and a most intimate companion, died in my arms while I was attending him during a lull in the fight. In his death I realized for the first time the sadness and cruelty of war. Besides the loss of men, it did not seem possible for a vessel to be so completely riddled with shot and shell and escape being sunk or disabled by damage to machinery. Our pilot-houses, there being one at each end of the vessel, drew a large portion of the

musket shots. The pilots, however, were securely protected by iron plates that lined the inside of the houses, but the woodwork on the outside was cut to pieces. The "Commodore Barney" was hit several times with shot and shell, and exploded a hundred-pounder rifled gun in the action. The other vessels were somewhat damaged, but being at long range did not suffer like the "Stepping Stones," and none were disabled except the "Mount Washington."

Early on the morning of the thirteenth of April the dead and wounded were conveyed in a steamer to Newport News for burial or treatment. The "Stepping Stones" took on board thirty-three men who had volunteered from the Admiral's ship, the "Minnesota," at Hampton Roads. They left their ship, where they had spent an inactive life, not knowing the realities of war, and expecting to have a frolic. But when shipmates saw those who had left their ship the day before, happy and full of joy at being released from their confinement, now dead, or carefully handled, while groans and shrieks of pain told of suffering from a shattered limb or a mortal wound, a sadder feeling was observed to pass

over these men. One, a young man who was placed in my charge, was so overcome by the spectacle that he never spoke after he went aboard, and before night fell dead at his gun.

The decks were cleaned and repairs made to resume the work. At nine o'clock the signal was given to get underway. Our anchor had to be raised by the use of a tackling, and while the men were thus engaged on the forward deck, a volley was fired by a party of a hundred or more rebel infantry who had concealed themselves during the night on a point of land about one hundred yards from the vessel. The crew were thrown into confusion, and many fell dead or wounded without a thought of being in danger. The cable was let go without further attempt to raise the anchor, and the vessel moved out of range. This cowardly assault of the enemy enraged every man in the fleet, and preparations were hastily made to punish them. The "Commodore Barney" took a position so as to prevent escape from the point occupied by the rebels. The "Stepping Stones," "Cordelin" and "Zouave" advanced to within short range, and with shrapnell and canister

raked the ambushade with such a tempest of iron that it would seem impossible for any of the rebels to escape. I saw a number at different times jump up from the long grass to run, but the next moment they would disappear before a shower of canister hurled at them by some of our gunners. This, and the action of the previous day, taught the rebels in Longstreet's army not to attack a gunboat with infantry unless well protected; and the "Stepping Stones," while on the Nansemond, was never again attacked except by a few bushwhackers.

At noon the fleet started up the river. When the scene of the previous day's engagement was reached it was found that the enemy had erected an earthwork which commanded the narrow passage and a long range down the river. A battle with this battery was immediately commenced. The "Stepping Stones" moved forward and backward in front of the enemy without intermission, until late in the afternoon, when we retired without success. The object was to silence the guns of the battery and to force a passage up the river. The damage to the vessel was considerable, as the enemy's guns were

well trained. The casualties were less than on the previous day, but I had no means of learning how many. Our bulwarks had been completely shot away in this and other engagements by our own cannon, in depressing them to the rebel infantry, who were hid close to the shore. Some of the hammocks, including my own, had been piled up for protection. During the hottest of the engagement these took fire, and to prevent the flames from spreading over the vessel, they were thrown overboard. My clothes-bag had been used to obstruct the recoil of a cannon, and that went with my bedding; so for the second time in seven months I had to sleep on deck, and had only one suit of clothes. "Lucky to have that," I said to one of the crew who had met the same loss and was grumbling about it. "Lucky not to be sewed up in a canvas one," said a chap more sensible. "I hope I shall have a chance to wear mine out," added another.

At one time during the most exciting part of the day, a shotman got a shot into my gun before the cartridge, temporarily disabling it. While I was holding up the trail, and other men were assisting in

drawing the charge, the carriage was hit with a solid shot, and the gun knocked to the other side of the deck. At the same time a shower of bullets drove the men from the forward deck. The first I noticed, after a seemingly unconscious moment, was our flag drooping from the flag-staff, ~~the halyards having~~ been cut off by a bullet. Mr. Lawrence, our executive officer, whom I have neglected to mention before, rushed across the deck with a yell, "Come along, boys," and seizing the halyards hauled up the flag, and quickly making them fast, turned to order his men again, but found they had followed him and were at work.

At this time three powdermen were waiting to deliver their ammunition, and taking charge of another gun I heard the order, "Give them canister—double rounds!" A third was inserted into the gun; the last not having the cartridge separated, stuck out of the muzzle about four inches. I threw double stoppers under the wheels of the carriage, and cried out, "*Stand clear!*" Giving the lockstring a pull, I saw the gun go backwards from me, and was enveloped in a whirlwind of fire and smoke; at the

same time the gun that had been dismounted went tumbling across the deck. The lieutenant had double-loaded and discharged it by placing the muzzle on the cap-log of the deck. When I found my gun it stood upright against the engine-room. As I was removing it, I looked over the iron plating that protected the engineer and saw him lying flat on the floor, with his nose so near it that he could not see sideways, and with one hand on the crank that worked the engine. After the fight I heard him relate the incident, in the course of which he said that the plating was not quite high enough, so he sat down, but he thought once that the rebels had shot a log cabin at us, or we had been run into by another vessel.

April fourteenth. The only vessels remaining on the Nansemond were the "Commodore Barney," "Stepping Stones," "Zouave" and "Cordelin," the others having gone during the night to the York river, where the enemy were threatening an attack on our troops. All was quiet that morning in the fleet, except the removal of the dead and wounded and receiving new men from vessels at Hampton Roads.

At noon the three vessels, not including the "Barney," started up the river, determined to run the rebel battery at Hill's Point. They were not to engage the battery except as they passed it. The "Stepping Stones" was first to start, and although the firing of the enemy was sharp, we should have run by safely if we had not been obliged to return to the assistance of the "Cordelin," which was disabled by a shot that struck the wheel-house, killing two pilots and demolishing the wheel. We did not go back, however, any further. In the midst of the firing we made fast to the disabled vessel and towed her past the battery up the river.

The damage to the vessels proved to be slight, although the rebels made some good shots. Both the other vessels were hit several times. Our pilot house was hit twice, but without injury to the pilots. There were numerous riflemen that kept up a steady fire upon us, and stuck like bees, as they were out of sight and our firing did them no harm. One of the incidents of the fight in which courage was displayed and deserves mention, happened to one of our firemen named Sullivan. He had been accustomed

in every engagement to post himself behind a barricade of hammocks near the cabin door, where he had made a loophole, and did good execution with a breech-loading rifle. But this time he was unfortunate. A rebel got sight of him. Sullivan saw the fellow take aim and fire. The bullet struck Sullivan on the left hand, lacerating three fingers. With a portion of his hand hanging by the flesh and covering himself with blood, Sullivan stepped out in full view, and drawing his rifle to his shoulder, took sure aim and avenged himself, for the rebel was seen to reel and fall. It is not often that a case of this kind can be recorded, as a wounded man will, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, drop his gun and get out of the fight.

The most particular accident of the day was an explosion on the "Stepping Stones." There were two cases of fixed ammunition; that is, the cartridge and shell were attached. They were in the gangway, where they had accumulated from changing the time of fuse, owing to the movements of the vessel, or in using canister. There must have been between twenty and thirty shells and nearly fifty pounds of

powder in these cases, when a shell from the rebel battery crashed through them. A terrible explosion followed. The upper deck was blown into the air, and the rebels, who thought it was our magazine, and that the "Stepping Stones" would trouble them no more, everlastingly cheered. The only fatal result of the accident was to a pilot who was at the farther end of the vessel. He was hit in the thigh by a fragment of a shell, from which he died. I often think, and sometimes hear, stories of how hardened men will get amid scenes of blood, but this reminds me of an incident that I never knew paralleled. This poor, wounded man had crept to the hatchway, but before any attention had been given him, a man named Smith, who was hurriedly passing, stepped into a mass of clotted blood that surrounded the wounded man, and slipped, falling upon the deck. As he regained his footing, he stroked the blood from his clothes with his hand, and looking very angrily at the dying man, said: "Why in h—l don't you get into the sick-bay; I came near breaking my d—d neck."

The three vessels, "Stepping Stones," "Cordelin"

and "Zouave," remained above Hill's Point for several days. A hill between where the vessels lay and the rebel battery kept us quiet, and an extensive marsh and swamp, through which no troops could march, protected us from any assault. The lines of both armies were then established. The enemy had advanced to the river north of Suffolk, and commenced their works on all the favorable positions from Hill's Point, which was the left of their line of fortifications. General Peck commanded the federal forces, with General Getty on the right of his line along the river. At this point both sides of the river presented a continuous line of extensive earthworks, but I saw nothing of the operations farther south than Fort Providence, or the bridge that crossed the Nansemond at Suffolk.

While the gunboats were lying up the river, the enemy were planning to control the channel and to destroy them if an attempt was made to pass the battery. Our commanders were studying how to capture the battery, and so the game was being played. The vessels would occasionally go near enough to drop a shell into the battery, but not to

bring on much of an engagement. During the night of the seventeenth, I went with a boat's crew to find a landing place for the steamer in rear of the battery. It was very dark, and the greatest care was taken not to be heard by the enemy's pickets that guarded the shore. A landing place was found, and a boy named Jones was left on shore with a dark lantern while the boat returned to the vessel. For some reason the troops that were to be taken aboard did not arrive as soon as was intended, and not till after midnight did we get ready to start. When the vessel was seen by Jones, he showed his light, indicating that all was quiet, and the place to land. The vessel was run ashore, and the troops, numbering about five hundred men, a part of a Connecticut regiment, jumped off, and formed to advance. Donnelly and myself were detailed to guide them. We were going ahead nicely, as appeared to us, when a rocket was discharged, a signal to retreat. The soldiers had acted timidly, and either on account of the darkness, or because they were recruits, or whatever the reason may have been, they made the quickest right-about that I ever witnessed, and came near

breaking their necks in the scramble to get back to the vessel. I was astonished at being so suddenly left alone, and knew of no cause for the skedaddle. As I turned to go back I was joined by some other sailors, from whom it was learned that while some of the soldiers were poking along, a man, probably a rebel picket who had lain down in the grass for a snooze, was stumbled upon, and, springing up from beneath their feet, he escaped into the darkness.

The next night, the eighteenth, we took troops aboard for another attempt to surprise the battery, but after an hour's drifting about the river, the attack was abandoned, the reason for which I did not understand.

The next day we advanced up the river and threw a few shot into some tree-tops where the enemy had posted their signal men, and also into some troops that were seen moving across a field.

On the twentieth of the month (April), all the sailors who could be spared from the gunboats, and two companies of infantry from each of the Eighth Connecticut and Eighty-ninth New York, were sent to the "Stepping Stones." The vessel had been pre-

pared by the use of some old sails in such a manner that the enemy could not see there were any extra men aboard. The rebels had trained their guns to sweep the channel, as they thought we would try to run out at night, and their position was defenceless in any other direction. This was made known to us by the daring boy, Jones, who crept near enough to the battery to ascertain the fact, while he was awaiting the arrival of the vessel, on the first night of our attempt.

When the gunboats were ready to advance, the "Commodore Barney" opened fire from her position down the river, and the "Cordelin" and "Zouave" steamed towards the fort, at the same time opening fire. The enemy made no reply, nor could we get them to change the direction they had trained their guns. Our firing, however, had a better effect. It kept the rebels close in their bomb-proofs, and prevented their watching our movements. As the vessels neared the battery, a hill cut off the enemy's view of the river, while the "Stepping Stones" passed the other gunboats and kept out of sight until a road was reached leading to the rear of the fort,

where the vessel was run ashore. The officers and soldiers leaped from the vessel, and two twelve-pounder howitzers manned by sailors were run off, and they started together by the road to the rear of the fort.

A few foolishly brave fellows, not the least among whom was myself, managed a plan of attack on our own account. It was a lesson we ought not to have forgotten. Volmer, Donnelly and myself understood the approaches to the battery better than any one else, having been over the ground many times. We got thirty or more men to go with us, and seeing the other party start off in good shape, we took a shore path till the hill surmounted by the fort was reached. Then the dash was made. Each man was as eager to be the first into the fort as if he alone could capture it. The hill was steep, and patches of thick brush covered the ascent. There were no orders given, and none to obey. Each pushed forward on his own impulse. "Come along, boys! We've got 'em!" was passed in low tones of voice. A short pause by those who were first at the top brought the men together, and, without the accustomed yell, we

leaped over a low earthwork and were among the cannoniers. Our attack was sudden, and the surprise complete. Some of the rebels bolted, and others fought desperately. Our men struck vigorously with their cutlasses into those surrounding the cannon, and were making havoc among them, when we were attacked with bayonets and fired into by some infantry who had crept from their bomb-proofs. Such hand-to-hand conflicts as these are usually ended quickly. The first blows are decisive, and although a man's courage may hold out, his strength will soon fail. The picture of those few moments was one not to be forgotten. Volmer was a very powerful man, and with each thrust or cut with his cutlass I could see him open the space around him. Donnelly was very skillful in the use of a cutlass, and I can never forget how heroically he stood at my right, cutting and parrying with as precise detail as if he were on drill. Jones and Gover were near me, and slashed away in all directions, but held their own. In the midst of all this, a charge of canister from each of the howitzers, and a volley from our infantry, who had got into position, were poured into a force

of rebel infantry which was to support the artillery, and being quite a distance in the rear was hurrying to their assistance.

By this surprise the whole garrison was thrown into confusion, and they threw away their arms and surrendered. Our capture consisted of two twenty-four-pounder and four twelve-pounder brass cannon, and upwards of one hundred prisoners. Our loss was five men killed. I saw some rebel dead, but never knew their loss, as the prisoners we took were hurried away, and they did not know themselves. Next to the assault and capture of Fort McAllister, this was the most gallant encounter I ever witnessed. It was about sunset when the attack was made, and almost dark before I got a chance to explore the battery. I was employed in superintending the removal of the captured property, and was in the act of descending a narrow passage into what I thought was a magazine, when I was grasped by my feet and suddenly yanked, as I thought, into eternity. When I had recovered from the surprise, I found myself in a bomb-proof with Volmer. He had several candles burning in this not spacious apartment dug into the

earth, and was plundering rebel knapsacks. The corpse of a rebel soldier lay on the floor, and the officers' side-arms, and other property we found there, were secured by Volmer and myself. I anticipated bringing home some of the most valuable of these relics, and presume I should have done so if some one from the Eighth Connecticut had not stolen them from me.

It was quite dark when Volmer and myself got back to where our men were, who we found had taken a position at a narrow part of the peninsula which was defended by the captured cannon. Here I met Mr. Lester, one of our officers, who wanted me to show him the fort, and we started together to go over the ground where the rebels had surrendered. The spot was strewed with arms, accoutrements and other warlike material, some of which we gathered up. As we were about to return, and I was cautioning the officer of the danger in the direction he was going, we were fired upon by some rebel skirmishers who had crept up in the darkness and heard our conversation. I saw the men plainly from the flash of their guns, as they lay on the ground not more than fifty

feet from us. We both started to run ; the rebel bullets whizzed in the air about us or tore up the ground at our feet. In descending a slight incline on our retreat, I stumbled over a dead rebel, and must have turned a half dozen somersaults, for I found myself whirling in all directions, with the guns and bayonets I was carrying on my shoulder. I saw Mr. Lester disappear in the darkness like a shadow, and don't believe he ever picked up his shoes any faster than he did at that moment.

By the time I had recovered from my accident, (for I was somewhat bruised in body and limb), the firing had ceased, and I walked, or rather hobbled, without stopping to collect my trophies, back to where our men were. They were engaged at the guns, having been alarmed by the firing, and as I passed in rear of them was surprised to hear that I was reported dead. One man said to another, "Butts is dead ; Mr. Lester was with him when we heard the firing and saw him fall." Another remarked, inquiringly, "Did you know Butts had passed in his chips?" And another, seeming to have more sympathy, said, "Poor fellow ! He has got a medal of

honor." "Yes," was replied, "he has got a lead one!"—Such were the usual remarks among men in the service. It would seem as if they might think of their own danger. But such thoughts were expelled from their minds. In my opinion, positive disregard for any one else, and a recklessness about himself, is what makes a brave soldier or a daring sailor.

Greeley's "American Conflict" contains the following brief description of the capture of this battery :

A rebel battery having been planted near the west branch of the Nansemond, it was stormed and carried by General Getty with the Eighth Connecticut and Eighty-ninth New York, aided by Lieutenant Lamson and our gunboats,—six guns and two hundred prisoners being the net profit.

Sometime after the capture of their guns, I was one day in the camp of the Eighth Connecticut, where I chanced to pick up a Norwich Bulletin, in which an account of the affair was published, presumed to have been furnished by some soldier of the regiment. It stated that the Eighth Connecticut made a pontoon bridge of the gunboats, and after a severe battle and gallant struggle they captured the fort, guns and gar-

rison, thereby compelling Longstreet to retreat from Suffolk. I relate this to demonstrate how unreliable were many of the accounts that were given space in our newspapers in those anxious and exciting times.

General Longstreet made no further attempt to permanently hold the position on Hill's Point, the most important part of the siege being carried on near Suffolk. But a rebel cavalry force were kept employed along the lower part of the river, and occasionally a body of infantry and artillery would accompany them. Their business was to collect forage and animals from the plantations, which were well stocked, there not having been any soldiers of either army in that section previous to this time. There was no limit to the rebel pillaging; friend and foe suffered alike by their robberies, and these raiders must have furnished a large supply for their army necessities. They also made it their duty to look out for the gunboats, and if any boats landed, or a reconnoissance was made by the sailors, to pounce upon them, or lay in ambush to capture or drive them off shore. General Peck had fortified along the narrow part of the river, which prevented the rebel

force from crossing, and relieved the gunboats from further duties in that locality. Owing to a threatening disturbance on the York river, all the gunboats except the "Stepping Stones" were temporarily withdrawn from the Nansmond.

Our duties from this time were to operate against these rebel raiders and to prevent rebel scouts and traders from crossing the river on their route between Norfolk and Petersburg. At night one or more boats of seven men each would patrol the river at suspicious points, and our men were nearly worn out with night work and want of sleep. My own duties were hazardous, and for the time being I became a scout. Although this is a perilous and fool-hardy business, men are naturally curious and fond of adventure; and few scouts who were daring, as well as cunning, were captured.

Early on the morning of the twenty-second I was sent to ascertain if a section of field artillery, that was known to be moving about in the neighborhood, had taken a position on the western branch. I discovered the battery where it was expected to be, and learned from a negro woman that it was their usual place for

bivouac. While I was making my way through the woods, on my return, I saw a rebel guard on the opposite side of the stream, and shouted out to him. After the usual salutation of unhostile pickets we carried on quite a long conversation. This fellow wanted to purchase a pipe, and offered me a pile of shinplasters (Confederate notes) that seemed to be a great deal of money, if I would accommodate him. Knowing that a brier-root pipe was a luxury in the Confederacy, I did up the one I had with me into a bundle of dried grass, and seeing it floating well underway towards my temporary friend, we bade each a farewell, and in a short time after I was on the vessel.

April 23d, we were joined again by the "Commodore Barney," "Zouave" and "Cordelin," and the two latter accompanied us up the river. As we passed the western branch we discovered that the enemy had located a battery which swept the channel. Shortly after sunset the "Stepping Stones" started in escort of the other two gunboats to run the battery. It was intended to shoot past, and not to engage the rebel artillery. As we steamed down the river, the

battery greeted us with true rebel courtesy. A perfect shower of iron from exploding shells fell about us. The "Stepping Stones" had passed without accident, when a whistle from the "Zouave" called us to her assistance. A shot had passed through her pilot-house and knocked away the steering gear, and being unmanageable, she run on top of the piles before mentioned as obstructing the channel. The enemy had sawed off the tops of the piles at low tide, so that when it was high water they were entirely submerged, and could not be seen. In this manner a vessel would be held fast if it got upon them. The rebels gave a prolonged cheer when they saw what they had done, and for nearly an hour, while we were endeavoring to release our companion vessel, they fought vigorously. A battery of field artillery and a body of infantry kept up the firing in earnest. The grandeur of the scene to those who beheld this summer's night battle can never be forgotten. To me it seemed as if I was in the midst of some grand exhibition of fireworks, which, although in battle, I was forced to admire. An officer of the Eighty-ninth

New York, who was about a mile from the action, gave me the following description of the scene :

This engagement was a most sublime tableau in the drama of this great rebellion. The little fleet of gunboats, scarcely discernible in a deep twilight, passed and repassed upon the calm water as if they were visionary actors performing their parts. The sudden flash and loud report of their cannon, the ascending shells, with sparks from their burning fuses marking their flight, as meteors imprint the passage of falling stars, the explosion of shell far above the earth, illuminated the scene with flashes of golden light, while the booming cannon, the sharp report, and flash of the rifle, the loud hurrahs of our own men, and the clang of the rebel yell, all blended with this most terrifying, yet beautiful scene.

The twenty-fourth day of the month, the "Stepping Stones" was called upon to assist the Fourth Rhode Island and Fifteenth Connecticut regiments, who were engaged with the enemy near a bridge that had been alternately destroyed by the two forces, situated above Hill's Point, on the western branch. Our captain responded to their desires by sending two twelve-pounder rifled howitzers, of one

of which I was in charge. We found upon advancing that the rebels were strongly posted in a house and along the edge of the woods, and that our troops were getting the worst of the fight. I lost two men in taking position, but our shell soon drove the rebels out of the house, and forced them from their shelter. I saw several soldiers being carried from the field, among whom was Lieutenant George Waterman, of the Fourth Rhode Island, who had been hit in two places. Since the war I asked a captain of this regiment why they recorded Hill's Point in their list of engagements, to which question he quickly answered: "By thunder, Butts, that was as sharp a fight as the Fourth was ever in. Gettysburg and other big battles were big, because a large force was engaged, but the bullets flew as thick sometimes in a small fight, and it took a darned sight more pluck to face them at Hill's Point than it did at Antietam." This statement, I think, will be agreed to by every old soldier of the Fourth Rhode Island.

Early on the morning of the twenty-sixth, the "Stepping Stones" took on board at Sleepy Hollow,

a landing on the east bank of the river, about five miles from Suffolk, a squad of the Eleventh Pennsylvania cavalry, a section of a New York battery, and a part of the Twenty-first Connecticut infantry, and transported them to the opposite and lower part of the river. They were to make a reconnoissance, in view of some military operations, and had been gone about two hours, when our captain received messages with a request to forward them to the officer in command of the expedition. Lieutenant Lawrence volunteered to deliver the papers, and asked Donnelly and myself if we would accompany him. Lawrence was a venturesome man, and had more than once got us both into trouble. We did not readily consent, offering to do the business ourselves if he would let us. The danger of being killed or captured by rebel guerillas was apparent to me, from having a thorough knowledge of their usual way of following the vessel to any part of the river in the hope of catching some of us. As Mr. Lawrence was determined to go, and we must go with him, we prepared ourselves by putting on the best clothes we had, in the event of needing them in

a rebel prison, and armed ourselves with two revolvers and a cutlass each. Leaving the vessel we took the road the troops had gone, and proceeded without seeing a rebel till we reached the village of Chuckatuck, where we stopped at the house of Dr. Briggs, a Union man, with whom we were well acquainted. While we were partaking of some refreshments that the doctor and his good wife had prepared for us, a party of thirteen rebel cavalrymen rode into the yard. On seeing some of them dismount from their horses we made preparations for a defense. The family was greatly alarmed, owing, perhaps, to having been accused by the rebels of being in sympathy with the Yankees, and now by being detected in harboring them. The doctor, under no little excitement, showed us to the upper part of the house, where from a window we watched the movements of the rebel cavaliers. We felt secure in our position against the force we saw, and it was only by the greatest persuasion and regard for our friends that the lieutenant could be prevented from making an attack. They did not stay long, however, for upon inquiring for us, stating that we had been seen to

leave the vessel, Mrs. Briggs and her daughter, a young lady, who had intercepted them at the door, told the rebel officer that we had called there for some water, and had been gone but a few minutes. Thinking they would soon be able to overtake us, the rebels leaped into their saddles and galloped away. We then finished our meal, and thanking our friends for all they had done for us on this and other occasions, we continued our journey. Mr. Lawrence acknowledged to me some weeks later that his only object in carrying those dispatches was to have an interview with Miss Briggs. Proceeding on our way we soon came in sight of the rebel cavalry, who were actively engaged in a bushwhacking fight with our troops. After some difficulty, by a circuitous route through the woods, we succeeded in getting past the rebel flankers and uniting with the troops.

It was about four o'clock when we joined the troops, whom we found in line of battle, with the artillery going into position for action. In front of the line was the old bridge and the western branch of the Nansemond, along the edge of which was a small

number of rebels, who had been driven before the advancing skirmishers, and, in fear of being captured, were defending themselves as best they could. As Lieutenant Lawrence handed his letters to the officer to whom they were addressed, he inquired, "What is the danger?" and taking in the situation before an answer was made to his question, he drew his cutlass, and, turning to his two men, with a gesture of the blade, said, "Come along, you sailor men," and we dashed together down the hill to the river. We did not escape being shot at in this foolish act. Several shots were fired, and I saw the earth torn up in front of me as we advanced. One fellow, who was hid in the bushes, shot at Lawrence when he was near enough to have hit him with the gun instead. He was instantly placed *hors du combat* by a stroke from the lieutenant's cutlass. Three men, anxious to prolong their lives, leaped into the river, but when they got into the current of the stream they were obliged to take refuge behind the stumps of some piles that once supported the bridge. It would have been cold-blooded murder to shoot these fellows in such a

defenceless position. However, Lawrence emptied a revolver at one whom he saw shoot at him, but without effect, except to frighten the man, who would try to dodge by ducking his head, and he went under the water like a loon at every shot; then, half drowned and terrified, he would beg for quarters. As the result of this exploit, we captured eleven prisoners, who were taken in charge by the troops. This was one of Lieutenant Lawrence's fool-hardy actions, many others of which I could relate.

Our troops had been engaged the whole march with these bushwhackers, and the rebel cavalry, who had kept at work on them from hiding places and in the rear, had wounded two of the infantry, two of the cavalry and two artillerymen. Two cavalry, one infantry and one artilleryman had been killed in the reconnoissance.

The day following this event the "Stepping Stones" went to the landing at Sleepy Hollow to take in a supply of fresh water. Nearly all the men were on shore, engaged in getting the water to the vessel. I had been with them and had just stepped aboard, when I saw a white flag waving on

the opposite shore. I instantly felt that there was treachery in this, and that the act was performed by a band of unscrupulous guerillas, whose only motive was to decoy a boat from the vessel. I knew that I should be called upon to take charge of the boat in response to the appeal, and for the only time while I was in the service I evaded the duty. I stepped into an apartment near the engine-room without being observed, and at the same time heard the man on lookout report the object I have described. The lieutenant gave orders for a boat to be sent, and called my name. I felt like a coward, but reason soon took possession of my thoughts, and I became convinced that it was not an obligation to myself or my country to be murdered, or drawn into the enemy's hands by such an ignominious act.

I heard the lieutenant ask where I was, but no person seemed to know, till he met a man named Coleman coming aboard, who said he just saw me on shore. He did not know I had returned, hence the mistake.

The boat was finally manned with five oarsmen, a man in the bows, who held a flag of truce fastened

to a boat-hook, and Volmer, who was coxswain and in charge. Before it reached the shore, which was more than a mile from us, I stepped out upon the forward deck to watch the boat, and in time to witness a most barbarous violation of all the laws of war. As the boat approached the beach where the man was standing, a volley of musket balls was shot into them by rebel guerillas in ambush. Volmer and the sailor holding the white flag fell dead. One man was shot through the shoulder, and another in the arm. The other three were pounced upon and, with the wounded, taken prisoners. It was a sad occurrence to us, and one that provoked anger and retaliation. A more foul murder could not have been committed, even in war.

During the following night the "Commodore Barney," which had been absent for some days, came up the river and anchored near us. In the morning, an expedition comprising about one hundred seamen, in command of Lieutenant-Commander Cushing, was landed near the place where the flag-of-truce boat had been captured. The bodies of Volmer and the other sailor, whose name I have

forgotten, were found lying in the boat, and were taken to the vessel for a sailor's burial. The expedition had proceeded some three or four miles, and was about to enter the village of Chuckatuck, when it was attacked by a cavalry force of superior numbers. They made two charges upon the sailors, but were repulsed in each with considerable loss.

The first attack of the enemy was almost a surprise to our men. Coming in sight of the village as we emerged from a wood, the rebel cavalry was seen standing in line three or four hundred yards distant, awaiting our approach. The sailors were not marching regularly, as soldiers march, but were scattered for a considerable distance along the road, and on both sides, each one walking as he pleased. As soon as the rebel force were seen, and their motives realized, a part of our men rushed forward and protected themselves from the horsemen behind a rail fence at the side of the road. Others ran to assist our commander, who was giving orders to some men who were detaching a twelve-pounder howitzer from a mule team that had been used to draw the gun. All this was happening while the

rebel cavalry was crossing the distance between us. As they swooped down upon us they were met with a volley from the men behind the fence, and the next moment, when not more than thirty yards distant, Commander Cushing gave them a round of canister which broke the charge, and they turned and fled. An apprentice boy, a little chap only nine years of age, and a great favorite with the crew on the "Commodore Barney," accompanied the expedition. Captain Cushing had given the little mariner a revolver to carry, in order to lessen the weight on his belt. An officer leading the rebel assault, who had escaped many bullets that had been intended for him in the dash, rode upon the cannoneers almost to his sabre length, when this little warrior impulsively drew up the heavy weapon and fired. It brought the rebel leader from his saddle, and he fell lifeless to the ground at their feet. The horse belonging to this officer I succeeded in capturing, and it was as gallant in appearance as his master had been in action. He was very much admired by the captain of the "Stepping Stones," to whom he was presented, and several days later I left him

on board a northern-bound transport at Fortress Monroe, with a card attached to his halter, labeled "C. C. Harris, ———, N. H."

After the second repulse of the rebel cavalry, they attempted to fight us dismounted, and for half an hour quite a lively firing was kept up from places of concealment. Both sides became hotly engaged in this bushwhacking method, and both were anxious to get sight of the other. Once I thought I had outflanked a fellow that I saw shoot from behind a barn, and, while I was holding my Sharpe's rifle ready for a quick shot, a bullet from the fellow I was after struck the lock-plate of my gun, which sent me whirling on my heels, filling the air about my head with pieces of wood and iron, as well as paralyzing my right hand. Finding myself so suddenly disarmed, I gave up my flanking movement and changed to another base.

The expedition started on its return soon after this fight, in order to reach the river before dark. On the way a body of the enemy were encountered, who fired upon us from an ambuscade, and fled. In

this attack one of our men was killed, the only casualty on our side.

An incident occurred about the time of which I am writing that I shall always remember, particularly when I hear of the destruction of dwellings during the war. One day, as the vessel was descending the river, and at a point where the channel ran very near the shore, we were fired upon by a force of the enemy who had taken protection in and about a house situated near the water. This house had been a constant headquarters for rebel scouting parties, and the flag-of-truce trick was planned by the gang that was usually there. As soon as the firing commenced, our captain slowed down the speed of the vessel. We had no fear of harm from the rifle bullets, and were quietly floating past, when two women, the occupants of the house, defiantly strutted the piazza, waving a secesh flag, singing "Dixie Land," and other southern ballads. I happened to be standing near the captain and heard him say: "I wonder if them d—d fools are drunk?" I smiled at his remark, and expected to hear an order to man a gun, but he seemed to have no interest in the per-

formance. He was not one to forget such insults, however, and we all waited for the punishment that we knew was sure to come. A few days had elapsed, and the vessel was heading down the river again, when the captain called me to him and gave me orders to land, when the vessel stopped, with a boat's crew of sufficient armed men, and to enter the house and set it on fire, adding that he would shell it, but the women might be killed, and that he did not want to fight a woman with a gunboat. In obedience to these orders, I landed near the house. The men were sent in different directions as skirmishers and pickets to prevent a surprise. Donnelly accompanied me to the house. Ascending the piazza, we tried a door, which was fastened, then looked in at a window, where we saw the singers, not warbling secession airs this time, but bawling. Without ceremony we both put our shoulders to the door, and, upon entering, found one of the women too terrified to speak; the other was on her knees praying. My companion said he listened to the words and found that she was praying for Jeff. Davis, so he added, "Amen." We had no time for

explanation, and, taking a mattress from a bed that was in the room, I threw it into a fire on the hearth, and, seeing it well kindled, distributed its contents over the room. The women then became penitent, and begged to have their home spared. My heart was not of stone, even in those cruel days, and this act would not have been performed except in obedience to orders, which nevertheless I knew to be necessary and just. One of the women pointed to a bureau and a wardrobe, saying it contained all their clothing, which, with other articles, I had removed with the help of some sailors who had come in. All this was done in the quickest possible time, and, leaving the house, we all hurried to the boat. We were gone too soon, for the boat was barely clear of the shore when we saw a party of rebel cavalry galloping towards us, and we were hardly out of danger when they discharged their carbines at us. As the vessel steamed away, the house could be seen enveloped in flames, and an old servant trying to keep a somewhat spirited mule from entering the burning barn, from which the boys had driven it. At last by a flank movement the mule got the best

of the old lady, and, dashing through the flames into his stall, he was consumed with his home.

At night, on the first day of May, I was sent on shore with instructions to proceed to the rear of the enemy's line and observe their movements, as it was thought that recent operations of the Army of the Potomac would force Longstreet to abandon his attack on Suffolk.

I proceeded as far as the Petersburg turnpike, when I saw the enemy's wagons, loaded with camp equipage, moving from Suffolk, and heard railroad trains moving steadily in the same direction, which facts were made known to our military authorities before daylight the next morning. The following day and night Longstreet withdrew his troops, and the siege of Suffolk was raised. There could not have been anybody more glad of the rebel departure than the crew of the "Stepping Stones." They had been exposed for several weeks to the most hazardous trials of war. Day and night they had been harassed by the rebels, and sleep or rest had been denied except at unnaturally short intervals. There had been no fire on the vessel with which to cook

our food, the galley stove having been demolished by a rebel shell, and our provisions for a part of the time had been supplied from the army. The "Stepping Stones" had lost all her bulwarks. The upper deck had been blown off. The smoke stack was so riddled with shot that no surprise was excited at a remark of our admiral, S. P. Lee, that the funnel looked like a nutmeg grater. Two of our guns had been dismounted in action. The only anchor was a heavy iron kettle that had been taken from a rebel salt works. Our boats had been shot to pieces, and the woodwork on the sides of the vessel looked like an old target.

We remained on the Nansemond river for two weeks after the evacuation of Suffolk, when we were relieved, and the "Stepping Stones" went to Norfolk, and afterwards to Baltimore to be refitted for service.

I stayed on board the "Stepping Stones" until the fifth of the following October, (1863,) during which time, except while undergoing repairs, the vessel was actively employed in the waters of Virginia. On this day I was discharged by reason of expiration of

term of enlistment, and after a short visit to my home, re-entered the naval service and was engaged in the blockade of the southern coast.

Since the close of the war, I have never met a sailor who served in the James or Potomac river flotilla at any time during the rebellion who could not relate some hazardous story connected with the "Stepping Stones." Once I saw a man who told me, in answer to my interrogatory, that the last time he saw the "Stepping Stones" she was at anchor in a barn-yard, where she had been to reconnoitre.

"The captain wanted a good cup of coffee," I said.

"No," was the reply, "cows don't give cream down south. He was after *rebs*."

Another told me that he saw her towed out of the Nansemond river with nothing left of her but the hull, and he thought all of the "Stepping Stones" crew had headboards in the sailor cemetery at Newport News.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,
BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THIRD SERIES—No. 9.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
1885.



PROVIDENCE PRESS COMPANY, PRINTERS.

THE
BATTLE OF GROVETON,

AUGUST 28, 1862.

BY

REV. FREDERIC DENISON,

[Chaplain of the First Rhode Island Cavalry.]

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
1885.

[Edition limited to two hundred and fifty copies.]

THE BATTLE OF GROVETON.

IN the struggle through which we passed from 1861 to 1865, (a conflict on whose issue hung not alone the destiny of our nation, but as well the political and moral principles which were to dominate a hemisphere,) every battle had, with its crimson lines, a deep and ineffaceable significance. Like links in a chain, the separate battles made up the momentous war, and each bore its part of the terrible strain that tested the heart of the nation.

Upon the men who voluntarily left their homes and threw their lives into the bloody balance, it devolves to make a record of the scenes that made up the vast tragedy. Rightfully may they speak of the views they entertained, the sacrifices they made, and the sufferings they endured, and pay the tearful tributes to their comrades who fell. Indeed, it is their duty to furnish their experiences and testimonies for the use of the larger historians of our country.

To know the magnitude of the whole sum of battles stretching rough four years, we must duly weigh the separate, though related, strokes struck on the different fields.

At present we speak of one battle and of the part taken in it by the First Regiment of Rhode Island Cavalry. The battle of Groveton occurred in Fauquier county, Virginia, August 28, 1862. It was one of a long, memorable series of severe battles, beginning with the gory field of Cedar Mountain, in Culpepper county, August ninth, in which our regiment played a conspicuous part, and ending with the fiery action of Chantilly, in Fairfax county, September first, which opened upon our command. Those twenty-four terrible days and nights—hot with summer heat, but hotter with strife—were a part of General John Pope's memorable campaign of "On to Richmond" with the Army of Virginia, by the way of the Rapidan, with "headquarters in the saddle," and "no base of supplies," and "no lines of retreat," as the purpose was to live upon the enemy's country. The experiment was a bold one. The greater the pity that it was not successful. Pope was brave,

but was overwhelmed by superior numbers acting on familiar ground. In those three and a half weeks, long to be remembered for their record of heroisms and scars, we formed only too intimate an acquaintance with General Robert E. Lee, General Thomas J. ("Stonewall") Jackson, General Robert Ewell, General Ambrose P. Hill, and General James Longstreet, justly regarded as some of the ablest of the Confederate leaders.

That peculiar summer campaign will forever stand conspicuously in the memories of the cavalry forces of the Army of Virginia, since they acted such a constant and costly part in it. To the First Rhode Island Cavalry the experiences of those days and nights, of skirmishes and battles, now seem almost like wild dreams, as we bore no small part in the unceasing tragedies. We were involved in eight of the severest of the battles. At one time we were in our saddles eighty-three consecutive hours. We had in our ears for sixteen days and nights the incessant roar of cannon and musketry. For more than twenty days we did not take our coats from our shoulders, not knowing what rest or regular rations

did mean, but were constantly in motion or in action, leaving some of our comrades dead upon the different fields, some in field-hospitals, and others as prisoners in the hands of the enemy. That we were weary and wounded, covered with dust and vermin, and tanned in battle-smoke, tells only our outward condition. Our mental trials, far greater than our physical, cannot be told.

If we were so nigh exhausted and bewildered in those incessant death-grapples that such as survived to come under the friendly shadow of Miner's Hill, September fifth, found not a horse in our command that could even comfortably trot, or a comrade who could tolerably retain his saddle, on account of fatigue, it is not strange that now all those scenes should rise ghost-like to us in the retrospect. However, the leading facts were burned into our memories. The brand-marks and our journals enable us to present the story in its leading features.

Groveton occupies a point on the Warrenton turnpike, between Centreville and Gainesville, not far from the latter, east of Haymarket and Thoroughfare Gap in the Bull Run mountains, and northeast of the

city of Warrenton. We think the place never had any importance or fame except what was given to it by the battle of which we are to speak. The rolling lands on the north of it were termed Groveton Heights, being a low eastern foot of the Bull Run mountains. It was near fifty miles west of Washington.

Not unreasonably we may begin our narrative with some incidents of the day previous to the battle, as these will at least explain somewhat our physical condition, and also the position of the main forces in the contending armies.

The morning of August twenty-seventh found us, already weary enough, in saddle waiting fresh orders in the suburbs of the little, proud, war-bruised city of Warrenton—a place that in its *ante-bellum* dignity boasted of six hundred inhabitants—aristocratic slaveholders huddled together in their *hauteur* on this picturesque spur of the Bull Run mountains. Though we were greatly needing a little rest, having on the previous day marched to and fro full twenty-five miles, and near Sulphur Springs received some high-toned shells from the advancing “gray-backs,”

yet no repose fell to our lot, or to the lot of any others in Pope's army. The booming of artillery rolled up the mountain from the direction of Manassas, where the rebels, having outflanked us, were enjoying a brief triumph over a number of captured baggage wagons. All the Federal forces in and around Warrenton were astir, and in a very nervous condition. Our communications with Washington, both by rail and telegraph, had been cut off. Affairs were seriously complicated, and our generals were rubbing their confused heads, issuing swift orders to be swiftly obeyed. The rebels were striking us hard on our right and our rear. As a strategic matter, our forces were looking eastward toward Washington. Pope verily had his headquarters in the saddle, and was looking for better quarters and a base of supplies. Our sick and wounded were moved by cars to Catlett Station, on the Orange and Alexandria railroad; beyond that, towards Manassas, the track was in the hands of our foes. As our infantry and artillery moved off early in the day, we were left as rear-guard. Clouds of dust were raised on all the eastward-leading roads. Our regiment was the last to evacuate the city.

It was always our lot to act as van-guard, rear-guard, flankers, skirmishers and scouts. Sabres and spurs seemed to be ordained for all sorts of service on the sharp edge of peril, where there was no rest. We were ordered to the extreme right of our army, to New Baltimore, and then immediately to a place called Georgetown, though the town part was a very small affair; but small things were always municipally great in Virginia. This position brought us within three miles of Thoroughfare Gap, and directly in the face of the advancing rebel forces.

Just at night we halted on beautiful swelling land upon the fine plantation belonging to Silas Hunter. We hunted for Mr. Hunter in vain. Reports spoke of him as rendering important aid to General Lee. His plantation was in charge of a Mr. Swarts, who was not particularly glad to see us. Fixing the headquarters of our command near the embowered plantation house, we threw out nearly the whole regiment on guard picket in the direction of Thoroughfare Gap, to watch the movements of the foe. At this time, Pope's army had been almost surrounded by the rebel forces under Stuart, Ewell,

Hill and Jackson. The remainder of Lee's army, under Longstreet, with Lee himself close in the rear, was ready to press through Thoroughfare Gap. As we were on the extreme wing of our army, without support, and immediately confronting the advancing enemy, though not discovered by reason of the veil of night and the dense forests, our position was sufficiently critical. However, our nerves had become indurated, and we held our line and watched the "gray-backs" philosophically.

Such as remained in the vicinity of the Hunter plantation house, having been destitute of regular rations for several days, helped themselves, without formality or giving a receipt, to apples, corn and toothsome vegetables. We are confident that a certain cask of new cider, in an out-door cellar, leaked largely at the spigot. The only difficulty about the taste of the beverage was that it reminded us of home, which was not exactly the thing to think of then. Mr. Swarts, *nolens volens*, furnished some of the field and staff officers with biscuit, which Colonel Duffie (Alfred N.) praised in true French style. No reviving sleep was here found; our eyes were on

the Army of Northern Virginia, then pouring along our front. Major P. M. Farrington, while reconnoitering near Thoroughfare Gap, captured four rebel stragglers, who informed us that Jackson was then at Manassas with thirty thousand men, and that Longstreet, with his corps, was within two miles of our position. A heavy force of rebel cavalry passed us within sight, but failed to discover us.

The morning of August twenty-eighth broke upon us in a lone condition. We were almost entirely surrounded by the enemy. Indeed, our whole army was well nigh in the grasp of the enemy. Jackson, Stuart and Ewell had passed around the right of Pope and were at Bristol and Manassas, and had a brisk but unsuccessful fight with General Hooker. They had hoped to reach our left and close us all in, but were beaten and were now falling back towards Centreville. Longstreet was on our right, having passed through the Gap.

The Federal army under Pope on this day, as nearly as can be learned, consisted of the following forces: Sigel's corps, nine thousand; Banks's corps, five thousand; McDowell's corps, fifteen thousand;

the corps of Heintzelman and Porter, eighteen thousand; in all, fifty-four thousand. The forces of Lee outnumbered ours, but we cannot give the exact figures.

We received orders to fall back from our almost isolated position near the Gap to join the forces then concentrating near Gainesville with a view of cutting off Jackson, who was hurriedly falling back from Centreville by the way of the Warrenton turnpike to unite with Longstreet. Though on the ragged edge of the enemy, beyond the reach of help in case of attack, we kept up a good appearance, as if we were a host, and moved coolly and confidently in imposing order, our plucky band playing the "Star Spangled Banner" and other orthodox national airs. This bold stroke saved us from being cut to pieces. The enemy thought we might be a brigade. At Gainesville we found a part of McDowell's corps, Sigel's corps, and the division of General Reynolds (J. G.), all feeling for the well-nigh ubiquitous corps of Jackson. Matters were exceedingly mixed. Pope was somewhere with his headquarters still in the saddle, and the saddle in

motion. He was anxiously looking for supplies and for reënforcements from McClellan. It is only a pity that McClellan did not make more haste to come to his support. It was, indeed, an exciting time. The question was, where was Jackson? There seemed to be skirmishing and virtual battles all along our lines, but where was the field for decisive action? Jackson, Ewell, Stuart and Longstreet moved with wonderful celerity, and kept themselves largely concealed from our sight, knowing thoroughly all the roads, by-paths and sheltering forests.

We finally had orders to be ready to feel for the foe beyond Gainesville, on the north side of the Warrenton turnpike, where, in mid-afternoon, had appeared evidences of the wily, swift-footed Jackson. Our command was to be in instant readiness for movement and possible action, as we were to probe the front and unmask the enemy. As usual with us on receiving such orders, we immediately detached our band, our small hospital force, all our servants with the spare horses, and sent them into a heavy cluster of forest to remain until they should hear from us.

This part of our command, while the regiment was on reconnoissance and about as the battle commenced, had a little chapter of military experience all to themselves, and one which they often recited with a good degree of appreciation. Having withdrawn into the forest, they at once, in true soldier style, hitched their horses to the tree-trunks and limbs, and collecting dry wood, kindled a fire for steeping their coffee. As they believed, a cheerful hour of rest and refreshment awaited them. Their fire was soon crackling and they stood or sat around it expectantly, telling camp stories, indulging in prophecies and waiting for their cups to boil, congratulating themselves that they were just now non-combatants and had some remnants of coffee rations. The tin cups looked well around the flourishing fire. Up through the trees and over the tree-tops rose the little column of smoke. That was enough for the sharp-eyed rebels, who knew that a group of Yankees must be below, and so, for a feeler, a "gray-back" battery dispatched a percussion shell that, curiously enough, dropped through the smoky column direct into the centre of the bivouac fire and

exploded in good style, lifting brands, cups, ashes and earth, *a la volcano*, high in the air, overturning astonished men, scattering frightened horses, and utterly demolishing the little camp. Some of the horses broke loose and were never afterwards recovered. A few of the men received slight wounds, and all had a good war story to tell.

As to our regular regimental train, we had not seen it since August nineteenth, when we left the banks of the Rapidan. Whether Quartermaster Charles A. Leonard and his men were dead or captured we did not know; and he knew as little of us. He and we lived alike by the skin of our teeth. He got into the fight with the rebel raiders at Catlett Station, August twenty-second, and lost five of his party by capture, and afterwards lost one of his wagons in fording a stream.

We were now quite sure that we were not far from the enemy's lines. From certain clouds of dust, we suspected that Jackson, on his way from Centreville to join Longstreet, was somewhere west of the old Bull Run battle-field, and on the north side of the Warrenton turnpike. To determine his

whereabouts was our special duty. We were accompanied by a light battery moving close in our rear, and by a detail of Berdan's sharpshooters. At our head, and by the side of Colonel Duffie, rode General J. P. Hatch, by order of General McDowell.

Our forces in this vicinity were now in the main a little to the west of Groveton, on the south side of the turnpike. This Groveton was simply a place of cross-roads, where the Groveton and Sudley road crossed the Warrenton turnpike, and might have had a post office and a petty grocery. We remember but two or three buildings and some stacks, as we saw the place through clouds of dust.

We passed Groveton in good order, our skirmish line thrown out on our front and left under Lieutenant Richard Waterman (Troop F), accompanied by Berdan's sharpshooters. The battery followed close upon our column. Our eyes were open on all sides, and our sabres and carbines were ready. We expected to find Jackson on the turnpike or on Groveton Heights, just to the north. We had scarcely passed Groveton to the east when we ascended a

heavy knoll which had an exposed slope to the north towards Groveton Heights. I was riding on the left of Colonel Duffie, at the head of the column, with field-glass in hand. Sweeping the field of vision, I discovered in an opening of the woods to the north, on our left, a rebel battery dashing into position to open upon us. Pointing this out to Colonel Duffie, he directed General Hatch's attention to it. The bugle blew a halt. All field-glasses were turned upon the disclosing front of the foe. We had found Jackson, and he proposed to find us. The rebel artillery rapidly uncovered through the woods; battery followed battery into position on the elevated grounds, and soon the guns began to belch. This was near five o'clock in the afternoon.

Our column stood in order in the road, with front to the east, and was wholly exposed to the enemy. Our artillery immediately moved to the top of the knoll on our front and unlimbered and opened fire handsomely. We soon called in our skirmishers, as there was no further need for them. The enemy's artillery occupied the high ground from beyond our front to some distance beyond our rear, all along

our left flank, and soon numbered, as we could only too well count, eighteen pieces, all rapidly and handsomely handled. Our regiment and the battery by our side were their targets, as no other Federal forces were in their view, though they were not far away on the line of the turnpike to the west. There were now three batteries, of six pieces each, playing by a cross-fire directly upon us, and all within fair distance for effect, and upon high grounds. We were in a hot place. Our army, on learning that we had found Jackson and were drawing his fire, began to hurry into line and advance toward the point of attack. Jackson, in person, was on Groveton Heights, near Brawner's house.

The first rebel shells fell a little short of us. The next struck in our skirmish line, which induced Colonel Duffie to call Lieutenant Waterman and his men to the column. A rough time they had in leaving the intervalle on our left and joining us. The enemy's shells next, in main, went over us. Very soon, however, many of these martial pepper-corns began to drop directly into our column. Most of them were time-fuses and burst in the air, hurling

their fragments in every direction. Our assailants had us handsomely before them, and they played their guns splendidly. But for the peril of limb and life, the scene had the really sublime in it. It was highly sensational. The three rebel batteries that first opened on us, as we afterwards learned, were those of Wooding, Poague and Carpenter, acting with Stark's brigade. The leading rebel force was General Taliaferro's command, headed by Lawton's and Trimble's brigades; at least, after the full tide of action set in. Just at this time, however, we seemed to be confronted by Stark's brigade.

Our position was anything but pleasing, though we had accomplished our errand of finding the enemy. The light battery by our side did its best, and deserved high praise, but it stood against fearful odds. Our sabres, of course, were powerless. No rebel cavalry or infantry as yet appeared on the front. We calmly, passively, even stubbornly, endured the storm of iron and fire. The affair seemed to us like a mixture of earthquake, volcano, thunder storm and cyclone. Even now we can hear the music, if music that could be called which was made

of howls, growls, moans, groans, screeches, screams and explosions. With six or eight of these rebel shells in the air at a time, above and around us, it was impossible to catch the key-note of the harmony. It might have been a tune for demons to dance to. The rebels evidently enjoyed it. Upon the whole, they took good aim and did their work well.

In a very few moments five of our horses lay dead. Others were cut by fragments of shells. A number of our men were wounded. Captain Charles N. Manchester (Troop D), who had long been assiduously cultivating a dew-like adornment of his upper lip, received from the fragment of a shell a cut on his face, and coolly remarked that he feared for the safety of his darling moustache. Lieutenant Lorenzo D. Gove (Troop K) had his horse killed under him, but he calmly unbuckled the saddle, took it upon his shoulder and held his place with his troop in the subsequent movements, waiting to find a spare horse, a very rare thing to find just at that time. Corporal Thomas Linerhan (Troop A) had the cantle of his saddle cut off by a ricocheting shot that

passed over his horse. He saw the missile as it approached him and sprang forward to escape it. William Keating (Troop A) had an exceedingly nervous horse, that reared and pitched at the music of the shells and turned his head from the front, so that his rider was unable to turn him again into position. A cool comrade said: "Let him be; turn around yourself in your saddle and face his tail, and be ready for action." Orderly Sergeant William Gardiner (Troop F), in obeying the recall from the skirmish line, leaped ditch and broke his saddle-girth and lost his saddle, but was not dismounted. On reaching the regiment he found the horse of one of our New Hampshire men dead, and quickly appropriated the saddle to his own use. On remounting in the short stirrups of his new saddle, he being a man of double altitude, his knees reached to the withers of his horse. At this his comrades cheered him for his fine appearance. These little incidents indicate the self-poise and nerve of the regiment.

We had effectually revealed the enemy's whereabouts, and had handsomely drawn his fire. The Federal forces lying in our rear, near to Groveton,

were soon hurried into line of battle. The enemy was also on the alert, forming his regular line. Our regiment was on the extreme right of our battle-line, and a little separated from the main body. General Hatch complimented us for our calmness and gallantry, and ordered us to fall back nearer to Groveton and join the other forces on their right. At the same time the battery and sharpshooters fell back, as it was clear that a regular fight was now before us. The shells continued to break over us, around us, and amongst us. My own horse, for the first time, from the exploding shells, became almost ungovernable and thoroughly tested his rider's equestrian qualities. Over his rearing and bounding the comrades had quite a laugh. So completely were we enwrapped with screeching and bursting shells and smoke and dust that it was reported, and generally believed in our army, that our regiment was wholly cut to pieces. But ours was a salamander's life. Neither officers nor men lost their mental balance.

In falling back to join our main force, moving in good order, in column of fours, still under the

shower of shells, one soldier's horse became restive and broke into a quick pace. At this, Colonel Duffie exclaimed, "Stop that horse! One man run, all run! What a sickness! What a business!" One of our horses had a limb mangled by a shot; still the faithful beast kept his place in the column, hobbling on his three limbs and dangling the broken one till a sympathizing soldier ended his battle career by a friendly bullet.

It was in this action that we first mistrusted that the enemy was using explosive bullets. Lieutenant-Colonel John L. Thompson says: "I have an impression that this was the first time I heard explosive bullets. I was incredulous about that kind of missile, and am still, but I know I heard peculiar noises, and asked several what caused them, and was told it was the bullets, and it sounded as if it might be so; the explanation was satisfactory." We secured no such missiles on the field. Such bullets, however, were used in the war by the enemy. Specimens of these may be seen in the cabinet of our society.

It is worthy of note how much thinking a man

will do in an hour of battle. The roar of cannon, the screeching and bursting of shells, the hissing of fragments of iron, the whistle of bullets, the smell of the battle-smoke, the plunging and falling of horses, and the surging of battalions, with brave men here and there staggering and falling from wounds, have a powerful effect in keeping up the nervous system to its highest efforts, and stimulating all the mental machinery to run to its utmost speed. One will then think in an hour more than otherwise he might in an ordinary day. Nor is there that derangement or confusion of mind which many have supposed would be inevitable. Though the thoughts are multitudinous and swift as the lightning's wing, they are orderly and clear. If saltpetre and brimstone becloud the atmosphere, they clarify the intellect and brace all the heroic powers. The flash of arms quickens the speed of thought. In the battle of which we are speaking we were really under a sort of inspiration, as men are in all sharp actions, though at the time we were quite unconscious of the greatness of the excitement. We even marvelled at our seeming coolness.

The lines of battle as first formed very nearly coincided with the Warrenton turnpike,—our forces close to the road, and the rebels to the north of us. Our forces immediately engaged consisted of General Rufus King's division of McDowell's corps, with General John Gibbon's brigade in advance, handsomely supported by General Abner Doubleday's brigade. We encountered the famous Jackson and his forces under Generals Taliaferro and Ewell, no inferior fighters. The exact numbers on both sides we could never fully determine. Both sides could certainly boast of quality. The two armies fairly grappled near six o'clock, and the smoke of the conflict was immediately so great that the sun put in a feeble appearance for the remainder of the day. Clouds of dust were added to the smoke. The enemy had the advantage of the higher ground and some shelter of forests. The artillery that first opened on us was soon so severely answered by our guns along our front as to be driven to change position.

Our regiment could witness only the fighting on the extreme right of our line, where we were posted

to make or repel a charge, as might be necessary. It would be a satisfaction to speak of the gallant behavior of other regiments in this battle if the length and nature of our paper admitted the matter. The only other Rhode Island force in this fight was Battery D, of the First Regiment of Rhode Island Light Artillery, commanded by Captain (afterwards Colonel) J. Albert Monroe. This battery was hotly engaged, and lost one caisson by blowing it up after it had been disabled by the enemy's shot. Captain Monroe had a number of men wounded and some reported missing. As the battery was near the centre of the line of battle on the left, we saw but little of its action, which, however, was reported to have been characteristically gallant.

The battle was sharp and desperate. Jackson knew how to fight, and his men had faith in him. He could march his infantry thirty miles a day and fight besides. In this battle, for fighting qualities, he found his match. Gibbon and Doubleday were enough for Taliaferro and Ewell. From the time the conflict opened on our regiment, near five o'clock, it raged without the least abatement for

nearly four hours, and was at its height from six to nine o'clock. We were never in a more determined action. Both sides were resolved to win, and fought at their best. We were under fire through the whole, and before it closed we were again brought to the extreme front on the right. It was literally an incessant tornado of artillery and musketry. Strangely enough, the enemy revealed no cavalry. The havoc on all sides was fearful. As the night shut down, the flashing fires of cannon and muskets lit up the field and the forests. Jackson attempted to dash upon us and crush us, but we unflinchingly withstood him, and even compelled him to yield something of his ground. In his report he said: "The conflict was fierce and sanguinary; the loss on both sides was heavy."

Among the rebel wounded were Generals Taliaferro and Ewell. Colonel Neff, of the Thirty-third Virginia Regiment, was killed. In his report, General Taliaferro said: "Here, one of the most terrific conflicts that can be conceived occurred; . . . for two hours and a half, without an instant's cessation of the most deadly discharges of musketry,

round shot and shell, both lines stood unmoved, neither advancing, and neither broken nor yielding." We know how true this testimony is, and how stubborn and sanguinary that contest was. Since our enemies concede our cool courage and unyielding bravery, we can do no less than honestly acknowledge theirs. On this field, so far as gallant devotion to their cause was concerned, we found a foe worthy of our steel. The more is the pity that his cause was wrong. And so far as we were concerned, we fought not from any enmity to men as such, but from opposition to an unrighteous cause and a system that opposed itself to the peace of our country and the liberties of mankind. Jackson was a conscientious man, and hence such a desperate fighter. But he found as much conscience keyed to the fighting pitch on our side.

It is not possible to give a pen-sketch of the battle as it raged that night from seven to nine o'clock, under the pall of night, thickened by clouds of smoke and dust, pierced by flashing guns and flaming missiles. The very atmosphere seemed to be incessantly torn in pieces. But the ghastly scene

and roar of arms, though impossible to be depicted, can never be forgotten. Only soldiers can imagine it.

When from darkness and physical exhaustion the conflict ceased at about nine o'clock, our regiment stood on the front, on the north side of the road, near a wood. We were ordered, like the rest of the forces, to rest on our arms. We held our horses by their bridles, and endeavored to catch a little restful breath. As to sleep, we had not indulged in that luxury for some days, and this was a poor place in which to make any such venture. Still a few of our men struck out into dreamland. The infantry near us, on our left, threw themselves on the earth and were soon fast asleep. Our position on the right of the line, and the care of our horses, suffered us no such liberty.

Our army held the field. In this fight, Jackson gained no advantage. Both armies lost heavily, the enemy losing the most; the number of dead and wounded we cannot fully give, as the reports of this battle were mixed with the actions of other days in that stormy campaign. We know that the losses

amounted to thousands. We had many horses killed, and both men and horses wounded. We lost but one man by capture, Corporal T. Leary (Troop E), whose horse gave out in the action. The losses were heaviest near the centre of our line.

Soon after the close of the battle, before midnight, General Lee, having come through Thoroughfare Gap, reënforced Jackson with Longstreet's command, when the conjoined rebel forces moved early in the night and flanked our army on the west. Of necessity our forces about midnight were obliged to fall back toward Manassas Junction. As in all similar cases, our regiment was designated as rear-guard, and was the last Federal force to leave the field. So critical was the situation that all orders were given in a whisper. As these passed along the front, we were equally surprised and pained. The regiments and batteries, rousing themselves from their exhaustion and half-slumber, moved off slowly and in profound silence. That silence of a summer midnight on that gory field, under those critical circumstances, was more oppressive to the heart, more painful, more terrible, more piercing to

our innermost natures than the thunder of battle and the hour of carnage. To leave a well-fought field strewn with our dead and wounded, giving all to the mercy of such foes as were pressing upon us, was a thought intolerable. Never were our sensibilities more wounded. Many of the dead and dying were necessarily left on the field. Our orders admitted of no delay. We took with us as many of the sufferers as we could. Every available ambulance was crowded to its utmost. The wounded were crying for water; many of them were dying. Probably in all our regiment there was not a pint of water to be found. Thus to abandon comrades on the field, some to perish where they had so bravely fought, others to become victims of Libby Prison and Belle Isle, was an experience that wrung our hearts with anguish and filled our eyes with tears. Both officers and soldiers unite in declaring that this was one of the most trying hours of the whole war. Soldierly fellowships are inexpressibly deep and tender. In this agony of mind, obedient to orders, we turned when all others had left, and fell slowly, cautiously back toward Manassas. That slow, dark march, at

dead of night, as rear-guard of the army, from that bloody field, over other fields lately torn by the plowshare of battles, was itself a chapter of history, a type of Pope's campaign, full of doubts, fears, resolutions and hopes that live in the memory like a horrible dream. But there was no dream about it; all was painful reality.

The full recollections of that sanguinary action, with others kindred to it, though now shaded and softened by time and the political and moral changes that have passed upon our country in the score of subsequent years, cannot be expressed by pen or voice. Pope did what he could, and deserves our praise. We wish we could say as much of all his subordinates during the next three days. The cavalry arm was never suspected of being wanting. Ah! what secrets of experience remain in the breasts of the actors in that campaign; the burning purposes; the high resolves; the imminent perils; the brave efforts; the alternating hopes and fears; the indifference to pain and death for ourselves; the devotion to country; the determination to overthrow the rebellion; the terrific battle-strokes;

the sight of dying friends and foes,—all these deep experiences and tragic scenes return to us, but strangely calmed, chastened, and made even sacred by the final issues of the great strife of which they were a part, and the knowledge that our sufferings and losses were not in vain, but for the advancement of freedom and the future welfare of our nation and our continent. Our animosities were never against persons, but against treason, disunion and oppression. All have now subsided with the expiration of the evil causes. Our once fervid and irresistible passion of patriotism, though still the same, may now be said to be latent in us, having grown calm in the serene air of our country's peace, security and prosperity. Never, however, can we forget the struggle; never ought we to do so. The flail of war threshed out the wheat of freedom. Loyalty triumphed. Treason was vanquished. Slavery died in the fight that it challenged. The "Boys in Blue" may tell the story.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF EVENTS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION,
BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE
RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THIRD SERIES—No. 10.

PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.
1885.

PROVIDENCE PRESS COMPANY, PRINTERS.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MONOCACY.

BY

ALFRED S. ROE,

[Late Private Co. A, Ninth New York Heavy Artillery Volunteers.]

PROVIDENCE:

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY

1885.

[Edition limited to two hundred and fifty copies.]

RECOLLECTIONS OF MONOCACY.

[Read before the Society, October 21, 1884.]

Place and time—Baltimore, Md., July 8, 1864. Some time in the forenoon, probably between eight and nine o'clock. Scene—A freight train, loaded with Union soldiers, moving away from the dock upon the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Into the open car door, a private has thrown his gun, while several comrades, having seized him by the collar of his blouse and such parts of his person as they can grasp, are tugging with might and main to pull him in. Private jumps and climbs, for there are no steps to assist him in his entrance. Had his garments or friends been less strong, he would have been left behind, and possibly would not have had a part in the battle of Monocacy. If so, your reader would be

unable to describe, as an eye witness, what he saw in that engagement.

A portion of the Sixth Army Corps, including the Ninth New York Heavy Artillery, to which I belonged, had just arrived from City Point, Virginia. Morning's dawn had found us moored at a dock, and near at hand were many steeples and monuments; but that the city was Baltimore, we had only our inferences to conclude from. None, save the managers of the expedition, knew its destination. However, the place was Baltimore, and after our frugal repast we boarded a train of freight cars bound for some western place; but where, no one of us had the least idea. But there were many backings and fillings. The morn was wearing away. Always hungry, the proximity of food, other than salt pork and hard tack, roused our appetites to a famishing pitch, and at last, with Captain Hyde's consent, I set off up a steep bank to see what a hospitable looking house might afford. Imagine the melancholy look I wore when I modestly asked for a drink of water. The water was readily given by a pleasant-faced woman who was busy frying apple fritters. The air

fairly reeked with the appetizing odor, and if ever a boy looked a request, I am sure I did. At any rate, the good woman speedily transferred two of the crisp cakes to my hands, and, before I could express my thanks, she had plentifully covered them with molasses. Shades of Epicurus! Ne'er had gourmand such a tempting morsel. As I remember the moment it seems as though never, before nor since, have I tasted such toothsome food. Thanks! I looked, spake and acted thanks. I never knew whether she was Union or Confederate. I didn't care. She was more. She was a woman in form and heart, and she knew a hungry boy by his looks.

But all of this took time, and with food in hand I started from the house. Molasses trickled through my fingers, but not a crumb of the precious fritters did I lose. My starting place, or point where the train could be seen, was on a high bank, a hundred feet or more above the railroad. The train was moving, and soon also was I, rapidly. Down that bank I dashed. My accoutrements flapped about me like loose casements in the wind; my steps were fashioned after those of Jack the Giant Killer when he

put on his long-stepping boots. As good or ill luck would have it, I didn't fall, I didn't drop anything, and by the aid of my comrades I was soon in the car with them. My good luck was evident in that I was with my company, and bore no appearance of trying to shirk the work that was probably before us. My ill luck was apparent the day afterward, when, through my presence at Monocacy, I fell into the hands of the rebels.

Of our ride through the fertile acres of Maryland, covered with luxuriant vegetation, so different from the sandy, dreary wastes of Petersburg, whose vicinity we had recently left, it is unnecessary to say more than that we enjoyed every rod of it. It was something to see thrifty people and well kept houses again; and the "Star Spangled Banner" floating from many a farm-house, told us that we were in God's land once more. The people themselves actually seemed glad to see us. The rank and file were still in ignorance of our end and aim. At the Relay House we took the main line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, so we knew that we were not *en route* for Washington. Nature wore her very loveliest

garb when we made this trip. Wheat, cut and bound, was standing in sheaf on hundreds of acres, and one, at least, of our party hoped that if we must make war, it might be where every prospect pleased. A stray copy of a newspaper had told us that Early had made a northward movement, and when we reached Monocacy Junction we began to think that possibly our journey was to have an Early termination, especially when we were switched off upon the Frederick City branch. In one way or another, nearly the whole day was consumed in our trip of scarcely more than sixty miles. The hour of our arrival at the city which Whittier has immortalized, I cannot give; but I know that twilight settled down upon us shortly after we marched through the town and formed in line of battle west of the city.

Flags were numerous as we proceeded through the streets, but we saw nothing of Barbara Frietchie and her "silken scarf." A few hours afterwards rebel banners were as common as were now Union flags; at least so some of the picket line, who were taken prisoners, stated. It would seem that the good citizens had learned wisdom and were prepared to

placate either army. Though not so often occupied by rival forces as Winchester, Virginia, the city saw much, during the war, of both Federal and Confederate troops. It may have been a mile west of Frederick that we filed into a field of corn more than breast high, and, in line, awaited further developments. The sun was fast hastening to his setting over the hills to the westward. We were told that the line of elevated land was Catochin Mountains. The scene was a beautiful one. At sundry points were great clouds of dust, which indicated the march of rebel soldiers. Now and then we saw what seemed to be batteries of artillery. A line of pickets was thrown out which, intentionally or otherwise, was not called in when we retreated, and so fell a prey in most instances to the advancing foe.

Soldiers are always hungry, and the fertile surroundings roused in the minds of many of the men visions of what the fine houses might contain. My friends, Foster and Searls, prevailed upon me to take care of their guns while they slipped out to see if something better than usual soldier's fare might be found. Unfortunately for me, while they were

away, we were about-faced, and I carried my own equipments and two extra guns not only back to Frederick, but through the city, and, I verily thought, half way to Baltimore, before they overtook the company and resumed their arms. A good drink of fresh milk to some extent compensated me for my heavy duties of the evening.

What a march that was! We had tramped over many miles of Virginia sand and mud, and thought we knew what marching was, but the hard, unyielding Baltimore turnpike blistered, terribly, the feet of every man who participated in that protracted journey. I have always thought that the officers in charge of the expedition hardly knew where they were, or what they wanted to do. At any rate, after marching till midnight towards Baltimore, we turned to the right, and though our new road was not so hard and straight as the famous "pike," it certainly was easier for our lacerated feet. The only episode of the night was the overturning of one of the guns of the battery that accompanied us. A squad of men, of whom I was one, was detailed to right the cannon, and again we went on till about two o'clock

in the morning, when, much to our relief, we were permitted to halt and lie down. Our long night march had made us extremely tired, and we were no sooner down than we were asleep. There were no beds to be made. We were entirely unconventional, and found a knapsack or cartridge-box an excellent rest for the head, and the starry canopy a sufficient covering.

Soon the dawn of morning showed us that our night wanderings had served only to bring us back to the point where we had left the main line of the railroad for Frederick. That is, a march of a few minutes brought us to an elevated place whence we could see the iron bridge across the Monocacy, the depot buildings, an old stone mill, and beyond it a fine farm-house with ample surroundings. Between us and the house was a large field containing many shocks of wheat, which, at that early hour, men were hurriedly gathering into the large barns belonging to the house just named. Before night another crop lay thick upon that field. About me were men replete with life and strength, who ate their soldier's fare and commented upon the beauty of the scene

might learn all that I desired. I followed my guide several miles before a halt was made, and after a severe thumping on the door of a cabin among the negro quarters of a plantation, we were admitted. After a strict questioning, during which I could not in the darkness see my guide, on whom my hand rested, a light was called for and immediately furnished. I was surprised to find myself in the midst of a great number of colored people. As I turned my head, I saw nothing but faces and glaring eyes turned towards me. A middle-aged man appeared to have charge of the meeting. No general conversation was indulged in, and only in a very low voice did he address me, or answer my questions. Occasionally I heard the rap of an outside sentinel, indicating that all was well. A water-bucket was placed over the candle, concealing the light in such a manner that only a circle of light covering the table was admitted into the room. I learned from these people that the confederate soldiers had been actively engaged that day in repairing the railroad, and the meeting was held by these slaves to consider the question of escaping to the Union lines. I told them

they would not suffer in our hands ; that thousands of their people had taken this refuge from slavery, and that provision had been made for their support if they chose to leave their masters ; that their freedom would be the result of the war, and that they would never be returned to bondage,—a penalty they seemed to dread, and the only doubt which they were anxious to have decided. What I said to them settled their views and confirmed their understanding of the cause of the war, and during the following few days great numbers of them came into our lines. Some were taken across the river in our boats, and several months later I was recognized in Norfolk by a man who said he saw me at that meeting.

When I had learned all I wished, I started with my guide to return. I could not help thinking as we traveled towards the river : How did our people at the head of military affairs know that Longstreet's corps was to be taken from Lee's army and commence an assault on Suffolk ? It seemed a most profound mystery. Longstreet had not then left Lee's army, and how our people could contemplate such a movement was beyond my comprehension.

They did know of it, or my instructions would not have been to give notice of such an advance.

At sunset of the next day, Donnelly and myself were dispatched with orders similar to those given me the night preceding, to investigate the progress of the enemy's advance. We did not go many miles to learn this. When we reached Zuni, a station where the railroad to Norfolk crosses the Blackwater river, we found an advance picket post of the enemy. Not fearing any danger from the soldiers we saw standing guard on the opposite side of the stream, we made an inspection of the bridge, which was found to be repaired in quite a substantial manner, and relaid with timbers and rails. There were also several cars loaded with what we supposed to be material for further execution of the work.

On the afternoon of the eleventh, the "Stepping Stones" went up the river to Suffolk, where, during the night, our troops were withdrawn from across the river, and the bridge in front of the town was destroyed.

On the morning of the twelfth there was great activity within our lines, and fortifications seemed to

have risen on the banks of the river as if by magic. Several gunboats, including the Admiral's dispatch boat "Philadelphia," a side-wheel steamer, with the fleet captain and senior officer aboard, and two or three steam transports arrived at Suffolk. After drill, the "Stepping Stones" steamed down the river, leaving a large Union force hurriedly working to build defences, and about four o'clock in the afternoon we left our anchorage and started to return. As the vessel entered the narrow part of the river, and when within about three miles of Suffolk, we noticed a dwelling-house in the distance to be in flames, which indicated an action between the rebels and our pickets. Nearly all our men were on deck viewing the fire when we were attacked by a large number of rebel infantry, who poured among us a simultaneous shower of lead. We were almost stunned, but the prompt command of our captain: "Get to your guns, men!" brought every one into his place for action. The enemy had not time to reload their guns when we commenced firing canister shot, and they were silenced. The vessel did not change her speed, and a turn in the river soon brought

us out of range of the riflemen. As we proceeded we were brought near a high bluff covered with trees, among which the sharpshooters were well protected, and for more than a mile of the passage we were under a continuous fire of musketry. The bullets flew as thick as hail over our heads, and flattened against the gun carriages, or tore through the light woodwork. The men worked without excitement, and stuck to the guns with the greatest nerve. This was our first time under fire, and it proved well the efficiency of our discipline and drill. The order to cease firing was given when we were again out of range, and before the decks were in order the vessel came to anchor at Suffolk.

Our captain reported at once to the flag officer, and before he could get back, and the anchor was up, all the vessels in the fleet, except a side-wheel transport that had not unloaded, were underway, heading down the river. This movement brought us in rear of three gunboats and three transports, a position not to be solicited in such circumstances. If we were ahead, there would be no danger of being blocked behind a disabled vessel; and as the nar-

rowness of the channel would not permit the passage of two vessels, it would have been a serious affair, perhaps the loss of our vessel, if such an accident had happened.

The "Stepping Stones" was considerable distance behind when the firing commenced between the enemy and the leading vessels. We commenced as soon as within range, using shell. As we got nearer, and having an enfilading fire, shrapnell shell was used, which for a time silenced the enemy's fire. As the vessel advanced, we shortened the time of the fuses until canister was used. The vessel moved slowly, on account of sharp turns in the river, and for nearly half an hour we were within a few yards of the rebel infantry, who kept out of sight among the bushes and trees. The smoke from our cannon was the only protection for the men, and but for that the enemy would have driven us from the decks.

When the vessel was very near the shore, and in the hottest of the fight, a boy named Lane, who was close by me holding his thumb over the vent of the next gun, cried out: "See that cuss, there; he just shot at me." Being about ready to fire my gun, and

attracted by his exclamation, I looked in the direction indicated, and saw a man wearing the confederate gray take deliberate aim and fire. I placed a primer in the gun, which, as the vessel moved forward, was brought to bear directly upon him. As the gun was discharged, Lane fell wounded to the deck. We were so close to the shore that leaves from the trees were blown back on the vessel, and when the smoke had cleared away, nothing but a bare spot could be seen where the rebel soldier had stood. What became of him can only be imagined. I never saw an instance of more pluck or real heroism than was displayed by this boy. It can be truly said that he was looking into the barrel of the rebel musket, and yet he refused to take his thumb from the vent, or dodge, or leave his post to save a wound, or his life, until the man loading the gun had stepped aside.

The next day, the twelfth of May, 1863, was the most eventful one in my war experience, and one that will never be forgotten by those who were on the Nansemond. In the morning we were joined by other gunboats, and as they may be said to have

composed the fleet, I give the names of the different vessels as near as I can now recollect them. They constituted a part of the James river and Potomac flotilla, and were all light draft steamers. The "Mount Washington," commanded by Lieutenant Commander and Senior Officer Lamson; the "Commodore Barney," Lieutenant Commander Cushing, of the "Albemarle" fame; the "Yankee," Lieutenant Commander Thomas P. Ives, well known to every Rhode Islander, as well as the name given to his vessel on the Potomac, viz.: "The Fighting Yankee." Not the least among them is the one I am proud to mention as being on board of, "The Stepping Stones," Lieutenant C. C. Harris. There were also the tugs "Cordelin," "Zouave," and "Dandelion." During different periods there were other vessels with us, but they were not at any time engaged in battle. After a quiet rest at night from the fatigue of the previous day, and our usual breakfast, the decks were cleared and preparations made for another fight with the enemy. The "Mount Washington," "Stepping Stones," "Dandelion" and "Zouave" got underway and started up the river.

We expected the enemy had moved down to the river in force during the night, and that we should have a warm reception. In this we were not mistaken. At Hill's Point was a row of piles which had been driven across the river by the enemy before our troops took possession of Norfolk. Through this we had to pass, and the shallow water covering a sand-bar prevented the vessels not mentioned from accompanying us.

We proceeded slowly, occasionally dropping a shell into suspicious places in order to draw the enemy's fire, or to give notice of our approach, but got no reply until we came to a sharp turn in the river which was swept for a long distance by rebel batteries behind strong earthworks that had been erected during the night. The enemy did not greet us with a shot or two, as is the usual custom, in order to get range, but they gave us a complete salvo of artillery that made the nerves tingle, and brave men crouched down in fear of bursting shells. The "Mount Washington" being in the advance was the first to come under fire. The battle was opened with fury at once, and an effort made to silence the

rebel batteries. But they had too many guns for us, besides being substantially protected. I thought for awhile the vessels would be knocked into pieces before we could change our position, as every shot seemed to hit one or the other of the vessels. Going back a short distance a slight protection was found for the hulls of the vessels behind a point of land, and from this position we fired as rapidly as we could for, perhaps, half an hour. I never was exposed to such an artillery fire before or since. It seemed as if the whole atmosphere was filled with deadly sounds. The sharp shriek of solid shot, the shrill of Whitworth rifled shot, the noise of elongated shell that seemed to flutter above our heads then explode with a loud report and scatter its deadly fragments of cragged pieces of iron with a quick hum and buzz among us, produced a medley of sounds too thrilling and terrible to be described, and which I have not yet forgotten.

While all this was going on, the "Mount Washington" had a shot pierce her boiler, and was run on shore to protect the crew from scalding by the escaping steam. The rebels, who were about half a

mile from us, thinking the vessel was on fire, sent up cheer after cheer in that effeminate voice so peculiar to southern troops, and, giving fresh vigor to their work, made fearful havoc on our side. In the midst of the descending shot and shell, the "Stepping Stones" went forward to the "Mount Washington," and as it would have been imprudent for our light built vessels to remain under such a fire, we made fast to her and took her in tow down the river. Owing to casualties on the "Stepping Stones," the crew of the disabled steamer, numbering about forty men, were transferred. There were none too many, however, for later in the day we had to be supplied again. As the vessels retired down the river, the "Mount Washington" broke her helm, or became unmanageable owing to damage done by the enemy's shot, and when we reached Hill's Point she veered from the channel and ran hard and fast on shore. The two tugboats tried in vain to tow her off. The tide had begun to fall, and nothing could be done except wait till another full tide. The enemy were not slow to observe the situation. They posted two full batteries of field artillery in different positions ;

and a regiment of infantry crept through the brush to within close range of the stranded vessel. The "Stepping Stones" had a double duty to perform. The artillery endeavored to destroy the disabled steamer with shot and shell, and the infantry were equally determined to board and fire the vessel, which lay high and dry out of water for several hours. The gunboats had no trouble in silencing the artillery and forcing them to change their position. A few men voluntarily stayed on board the "Mount Washington" to repel any attempt to board her, but only once in a while could they fire a shot from the only gun available, the others being completely covered by rebel rifles. The "Stepping Stones" lay where her guns swept a portion of the shore unprotected by bushes for the enemy, and at a distance varying from fifty to two hundred yards from the hidden riflemen. The other gunboats not being of light draft enough to manœuvre in this part of the river, kept the artillery quiet from their position, a half mile further down the river, and an occasional shell from their nine-inch guns exploding among the sharpshooters had a very quieting effect, and assisted us in keeping them at bay.

"Is that all you've got?"

"Every cent," was my reply.

"Well, keep it then. It isn't worth taking."

Small though the amount was, I was nothing loath to do this; for with us, at the front, considering the infrequency of pay-day, money was money. This small remnant was some remaining from enlistment; for no paymaster had ventured near us. In fact, I never saw any of Uncle Sam's wages between January, '64, and March, '65, and then it came in the way of commutation for rations not eaten while in the hands of the rebels. However, I had no watch, nor other valuables, so I did not net my captor very much.

By this time the rebel battle line was close upon us, and throwing down my gun the line passed and I was behind instead of in front of the Confederates. Since the day itself, I have thought of a dozen ways in which I might have made my escape, or have avoided capture in the first place; but forethought is seldom so good as afterthought. Were the events of that day to be gone over again, with the lessons then learned, not only would privates do differently,

but even general officers might profit. A line of earthworks, such as we might have thrown up during the idle hours of that long forenoon, would have held in check our foe for many an hour, if we had not repelled him altogether.

The next item of interest to me was a prisoner begging for his life from two rebel officers who, obviously, were trying to scare him; but it didn't seem so to him. He was an abject sight, but he survived his fright and traded a pair of shoes, too small for himself, with me for the plug of tobacco which I had abstracted from the Dutchman's knapsack, and which had not, during my dialogue with my captor and in the following moments, been out of my hand. This was a very fortunate move for me. I don't believe appropriating other's possessions ever turned out better than in this case. My boots, then on my feet, were dilapidated enough, but those shoes bore me comfortably over many miles of weary travel, and, with the purloined stockings, kept my feet warm during the cold days of the following winter.

At the railroad station there had been quite a quantity of military stores, including some clothing. This

had been seized most quickly by the rebels, and even as they advanced they were substituting Union blue for their own dirty covering. They didn't hate the Union outfit, if they did its wearers. Some of my fellow captives didn't fare so well as myself, for they were stripped at once of every stitch of apparel, and were left to cover their nakedness as best they could. I well remember one poor fellow who looked as badly as the shabbiest rebel I ever saw; in fact, I supposed he was a rebel condemned to march with us for some reason. His rig was beyond description. Had not the rough usage to which he was subjected somewhat dazed his mind, I think he might have escaped. No one would have ever suspected him of the least affiliation with the Union cause. He was one of the first to succumb to the rigors of prison life.

In the freight house at the station, lying on a pile of loose, ground feed, I found Ed. Ryder, of my company, bleeding from a wound which proved to be fatal. I did my best to staunch the flow of blood, but no mortal power could help him more than to relieve passing distress. I brought him a cup of water, and I can never forget the look that followed

me as I went out of the building; I to my long march and imprisonment, and he, soon, to the presence of the King of Kings.

Of course, I had many opportunities to chaffer away my effects, and, in my innocence, I gave away nearly all the coffee with which I had bountifully stored my haversack a few hours before, not caring for the tobacco, which was almost the only item that our captors had to offer in return. Besides, I didn't know how far they would respect the usages of Christian warfare and allow me to retain what was mine, the advantage in the matter of force being entirely with them.

Very soon we were directed to fall in, and having been divested of cartridge boxes and bayonet sheaths, we were marched back to the field whence we had retreated an hour or so before. Traces of the rout were visible on every hand. The ground was strewn with guns, bayonets, knapsacks, and, in fact, everything by throwing away which a man could facilitate his running. So back we marched, and finally halted in the yard of the homestead that had formed the centre-piece of our forenoon's observations.

Here were many prisoners already, and one of the first to grasp my hand was a sergeant of my company, and, probably, my most intimate friend therein. He had been taken on the field itself, as I soon learned in our mutual exchange of information. Soon after reaching this yard, an officer of the enemy came among us and said that if we desired to write brief letters to our friends, he would see to mailing them as we passed through Leesburg. Writing appliances were immediately in requisition, and the word sent from that yard at Monocacy was the last to greet many a northern home for long and dreary months, and, in some cases, the last forever.

At nightfall we moved out to the bank of the small stream running from the mill repeatedly referred to. Very little food was eaten that night. Thought had well-nigh driven all bodily cravings away. Twilight deepened into darkness, and as its shades gathered about us, I could see the guard steadily pacing his beat before us, making evident, more than ever, that we were prisoners. What a situation is that of confinement! The "I can't get out" of Sterne's *Starling* just expresses it. Put a man in a room filled

with all the luxuries that tongue can speak, pen describe, or mind fancy, and lock his means of egress, and you lock out happiness also. "I can't get out" overlaps every other consideration. It is this horror of barriers that has prompted men to endure privations worse than those they sought to escape, that they might, at least, breathe free air. However, all things yield to sleep, and, gradually, the subdued voices of those about me lapsed into silence, and finally I, too, was enfolded by the drowsy god in his restoring embrace. The pleasures of oblivion! In my sleep I could wander away from the scenes about me, and delight, even, in the pleasures of home.

At early dawn we were awakened by heavy cannonading, and our first thought was that a rescue was at hand; but it proved to be only an effort of the enemy to destroy the iron railroad bridges, in which attempt I have learned he was partially successful. The number of the captured appeared in its full magnitude when we were all brought together in and about a barn-yard near by. Misery likes company; but knowing the smallness of the force that had been sent to oppose the rebels, it easily seemed to me that

few could have escaped—save, perhaps, the officers who had taken the train.

A captured man's feelings are hard to describe. For myself, at the time, the predominant one was that of shame. I was constantly saying to myself, "If I had done thus and thus," but no amount of regret nor of retrospect softened the prospect before me. Near me were the bodies of men slain the day before. Some I recognized, and I had permission to look about among the dead to find, if possible, bodies of friends.

The day was Sunday ; but there was little of home observance of its sanctity as we filed out and began our first march under rebel direction. As we started southward, I took a farewell glance at the scene of the previous day's fighting. On every hand were lying the bodies of those who had fallen. From these, in most cases, the clothing had been stripped, and the stubble having taken fire, the flame was scorching the unconscious remains. Those sad, upturned faces ! How imploringly they seemed to look ! Boys there were who thus suddenly "saw life's morn decline." The bullet had sought alike

the young and the old, and here they were lying,
soon to be

“In one red burial blent.”

One last look I took at these sights, and an inter-
vening hill shut them out forever.

Vale Monocacy.

F 845.754

60 57

